

April 1918

cents

THE

RED BOOK

MAGAZINE



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PERT
GHES

The
New
Novel
by
**PETER B.
KYNE**

Jeanne Judson



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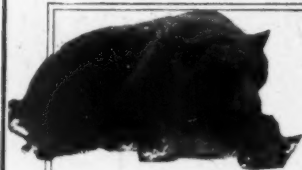
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By JAMES
OLIVER
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JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

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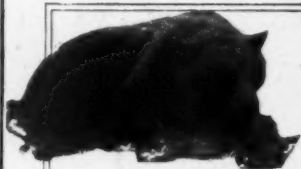
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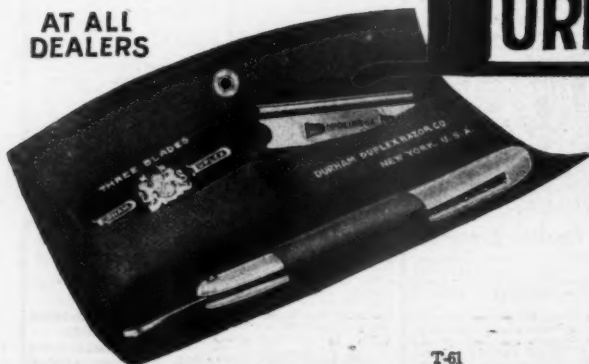
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Volume XXX
No. 6

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

APRIL
1918

Cover Design, painted by Haskell Coffin
Art Section, Beautiful Women

The Best Serial Novels of the Year

- The Valley of the Giants By Peter B. Kyne 30
Illustrated by Dean Cornwell
The Unpardonable Sin By Rupert Hughes 50
Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg
Crowns of Tin By Jeanne Judson 81
Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard

The Ten Best Short Stories of the Month

- The Lair of the Kaiser By Edwin Balmer 23
Illustrated by William Oberhardt
The Side-show Girl By Peter Clark Macfarlane 39
Illustrated by Arthur William Brown
The Sons of Calvin Fairfield By Royal Brown 45
Illustrated by J. J. Gould
Nothing Venture, Nothing Have By Meredith Nicholson 57
Illustrated by Frank Street
A Jester on the Border By Harry Irving Greene 63
Illustrated by Gayle Hoskins
The Jigsaw By Laura L. Hinkley 69
Illustrated by Will Greffé
The Quality of Mercy By Roy Norton 75
Illustrated by Robert W. Amick
The Bad Man By Edwin L. Sabin 87
Illustrated by Quin Hall
In Wild Strawberry Time By William Gerard Chapman 91
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The Man-Tamer By John Barton Oxford 96
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The best of Easter meals

You like to make Easter a festive day. You have flowers in your home, candies and Easter rabbits for the children, and to complete the gladness of the day you should strive to serve a meal of Swift's Premium Ham.

The appetizing flavor will plainly tell of the special care in preparation. Only the careful, special Premium cure, and the fragrant smoke of slow hickory fires could carry to every morsel of this ham such delicacy, such delicious flavor.

This year make your Easter a memorable one. Choose this specially-cured Premium ham. See how heartily your family will appreciate its unusual flavor and fineness. Be sure to see the brand name on the ham you buy — Swift's Premium.

Swift & Company, U. S. A.

Swift's Premium Ham



gazine

BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

An illustration of several pansies with dark centers and light petals, some with dark streaks. A hand is visible, holding one of the flowers. The background is dark with some light clouds at the top.

MARJORIE RAMBEAU	SUSAN GRANDAISE
BILLIE BURKE	LOUISE LOVELY
SYDNEY SHIELDS	CARMEL MYERS
ELSIE MACKEY	LOUISE HUFF
KATHLEEN CLIFFORD	VIOLET MERSEREAU
CHARLOTTE	



MARJORIE RAMBEAU
in "The Eyes of Youth"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



BILLIE BURKE
in "The Rescuing Angel"
Photograph by Apeda Studio, New York



SYDNEY SHIELDS
in "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath"
Photograph by Campbell Studio, New York



ELSIE MACKEY
in "The Gypsy Trail"
Photograph by White Studio, New York



KATHLEEN CLIFFORD
Film Play Star
Photograph by Hartsook, San Francisco



SUSAN GRANDAISE
Film Play Star





CARMEL MYERS
Film Play Star
Photograph by Apecha Studio, New York



LOUISE HUFF
Film Play Star
Photograph by Moody New York



VIOLET MERSEREAU
Film Play Star
Photograph by Moody, New York



CHARLOTTE
famous Ice Skating Artist
Photograph by White Studio, New York

The Secret Behind the Unusual Consumption Of Mince Pie Last Winter

THE greatest exercise in the world is shoveling snow. Golfers, yachtsmen, horseback riders, football men and baseball players will take issue, but it is my firm conviction that the statement is true.

There was more snow this last winter than the city street-cleaners could handle. The citizens themselves had to clear the streets, if they were to be made passable. And just as they got them cleared, along came another blizzard and it all had to be done over.

Bankers and brokers and bakers and grocers—everybody took a hand. Every night you could see brigades of citizenry literally making the snow fly. You could hear them, too; for there's a something about vigorous exercise in the open in zero weather that simply compels one to let out a whoop of joy now and then.

One result of it all was that some of us were able to eat—and digest—mince pie and such delicacies who had almost forgotten there were such things on the menu. Men who might have gone to their desks in such weather with sniffles and a grouch got there smiling and full of pep. The blood was pumping through their veins with a vigor that made life worth living.

THERE wont be snow for you to practice on for some months to come, but there is a revival of the movement to plant gardens in all vacant ground. It will receive more attention this year than last, because we all realize that the talk of tightening our belts through the war is not idle. We are getting used to having the grocer and the meat-man edit our orders for us.

It's a fine movement—this vacant-lot-garden plan. The way to make it really successful is to get it through folks' heads that in addition to being sincerely patriotic, gardening is real sport.

Shoveling or spading in the open air is a lung and muscle developer that can't be equaled. It is a stooping and bending exercise better than any gymnasium director can teach. It brings into play the muscles of the forearm, the arm, the shoulders and the whole trunk. And as Dr. W. A. Evans, the health expert, says, "If you have an idea that the leg-muscles are not used, shovel snow for three hours to-day and locate the sore muscles to-morrow."

OF course, it may be true that some of the garden-stuff grown last year cost the amateur gardeners as much as if they had telephoned for it to be sent by the corner grocer. But the majority of the gardeners saved money. And they got some things even more valuable.

The corner grocer could not have sent them the joy one gets from tending one's plot of ground. No grocer can sell the rapture of seeing the first green shoots show their heads. He has nothing in his stock to equal the health-giving qualities of the oxygen that gets into the lungs from fresh-turned earth.

And the food from your own garden—it fairly makes the mouth water just to think of it!

Let's make garden spading the fashionable outdoor sport this spring and summer.

—THE EDITOR.



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A PRETTY lace scarf or any other lace article is in no sense a care when one has learned that such pieces should be washed with Ivory Soap. The white, neutral, high grade Ivory makes it as easy to wash perishable lace as any ordinary fabric. Its use eliminates from the washing all the factors that cause trouble and loss.

Mild, pure and free from uncombined alkali, it is as harmless as clear soft water. The most delicate handwork can be entrusted to Ivory suds with the assurance that no special handling, other than what common sense suggests, is necessary to avoid all risk of injury to a single thread.

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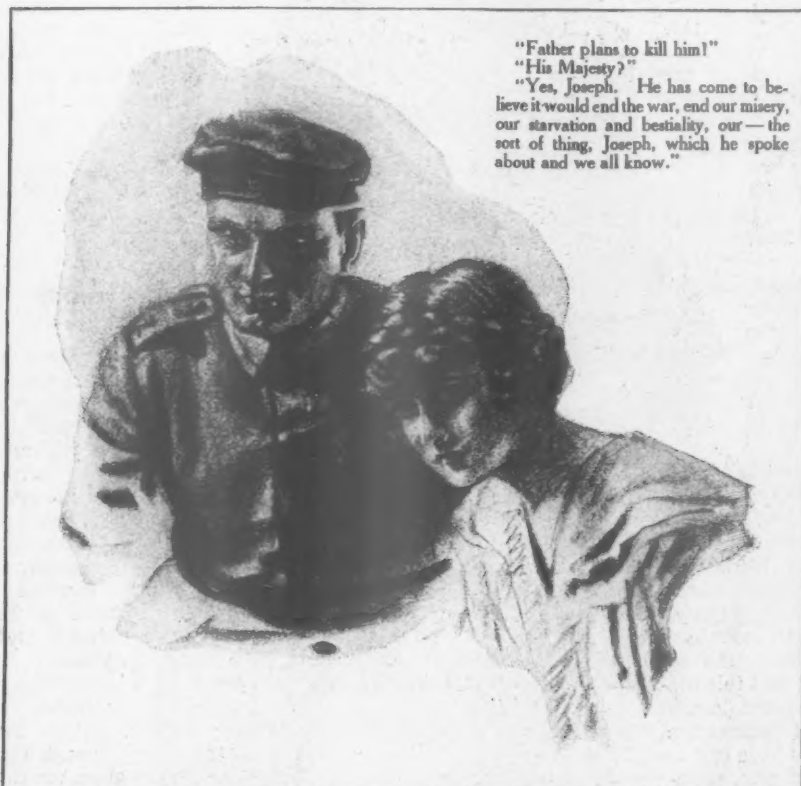
APRIL, 1918
Vol. XXX, No 6

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

RAY LONG
Editor

WE changed our entire plan of make-up in this issue in order to get this story into print immediately. It is one of the most powerful pieces of fiction ever written, not only because of its dramatic thought and action but because of its graphic and accurate picture of conditions in Germany to-day.

Illustrated
by
WILLIAM
OBERHARDT



"Father plans to kill him!"
"His Majesty?"
"Yes, Joseph. He has come to believe it would end the war, end our misery, our starvation and bestiality, our—the sort of thing, Joseph, which he spoke about and we all know."

By
EDWIN
BALMER

Author of "The Wild Goose Chase" and "Via Wireless" and co-author of "The Blind Man's Eyes" and "The Indian Drum"

The LAIR of the KAISER

THE Kaiser was coming again to Ehernschloss! It was a castle grim and ancient, well adapted for the relaxation of His Majesty. Rising from the top of the highest slope over that bend of the Rhine, its walls showed black and unbroken save for the deep, narrow slits through which crossbowmen shot and spearmen thrust and men-at-arms poured the liquid fire of wars long gone. Below and all about lay a wood, well tended before this war and mostly uncut since the last siege of the castle centuries ago. The modern city, which had sprung from the little ancient settlement of smiths, artisans and merchants who at times of danger took refuge within the castle walls, had spread far up the River and down; it had spread about the castle too, surrounding it at last, but without encroaching close. So the little forest, with its twisting roads and riding-paths through its tall trees, remained much as it was—a safe and suitable resting-place for the All Highest at the moment which had come.

For the War Lord once more had inspected all his

armies from Switzerland to the sea; he had spent tireless days in personally reviewing the plans of approaching campaigns; he had revisited Kiel and the submarine bases; he had presided at the Crown Council; he had seen to the establishment of the martial severities which, just now, had put down the Socialists' strikes; and he required a rest.

That he would take that rest at Ehernschloss was not proclaimed, of course; the excitement of the people, even along the Rhine, made inadvisable any news of His Majesty's movements now. Accordingly Hetty Stroebel and Unteroffizier Joseph Bolland were nervously aware that they had stumbled upon a secret when, in crossing through the castle woods, they saw the wheelmarks in the new snow which told that the Schloss had been reprovisioned during the night.

"It is for His Majesty, beyond doubt!" Hetty whispered anxiously to Joseph. "For no one else has the castle been opened these three years."

"Well, do we plan him harm?" Joseph boldly attempted

to dismiss her nervousness. He had arrived on furlough only yesterday from the Riga front and from a regiment which had been in close contact with the Russians during the truce; and he was full of astounding revelations of many sorts—of the truth of the German demands at Brest-Litovsk, the real Russian proposals, amazing facts of the motives of America and its preparations, of the failure of the U-boats and the size of the American armies in France.

"They have five hundred thousand men already in France—men as good as the Canadians, at least; and our armies know what they are!" He attempted to go on in the same tone.

"Hush!" Hetty warned, glancing about anxiously. "It will be bad enough for us to be found in here now. If we speak at all of the Americans, we must say that they prepare only against Japan; if they tried to send an army across, they could not; and if they got them across, they would not be real soldiers."

"I know!" Joseph said. "But the facts—"

"Hush!" Hetty begged. Since entering the castle woods, after leaving the town, they had met no one; but now, just ahead in the path through the Schloss woods, she saw a man in captain's uniform approaching. He stopped and waited for them to come up. Hetty knew him; and he knew her. At least, he had done her the honor to pay her attentions at his last visit, several months previously, when he came in the escort of His Majesty. So his presence made Hetty certain that it was again the Kaiser who was coming to the Schloss; and this captain must know that she and Joseph were in possession of information which they were not to have had. She was quivering and pale, therefore, as she approached the officer. Joseph saluted, and being an inferior, passed on when the captain halted Hetty.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded of her.

"We have been to the city, Herr Hauptmann," Hetty explained, "and are only passing through on our way home. This path through the woods has been permitted at ordinary times recently."

"There is no extraordinary occasion now," the captain said quickly, but less sharply as he gazed at her close by. "Don't I know you?" he inquired.

"I know you, Herr Hauptmann von Engel," Hetty replied.

"What is your name?"

"Hedwig Stroebel, Herr Hauptmann."

"Of course; I recall you." He put his hand upon her, not roughly, but feeling the quality of her flesh under her jacket. "You are the daughter of Ernst Stroebel, the chemist investigator. That gas he gave us—the first—it is very good."

"Yes, Herr Hauptmann." She shrank, quivering.

"It went right through their masks, the *englische*

Schweine! You should have seen them cough and kick! The Canadians, how it garroted them too! But what is this?" He felt her quivering. "Sympathy for the enemy as well as spying?"

"I was thinking of my father just then."

"Ah, what about him?"

"A retort in his laboratory broke, Herr Hauptmann. It had in it some of a newer gas. I have been caring for him six months. He is just getting about a little again."

"I thought you were thinner." Von Engel squeezed her shoulder. "But it becomes you—you are so delicately built; pretty, small bones, you have!" He exulted over her.

"These big-boned *Frauen*, when they have fasted a bit—ugh! But you are pretty, and the ethereal adorns you! And you are not—" He frowned as he remembered the man she had been walking with,

but he did not turn about to see where Joseph had stopped or whether he had stopped at all. "You are not a *Frau*, are you, Hetty?"

"No, Herr Hauptmann." "Not even a patriot yet?"

Deep crimson color stained Hetty's forehead and cheeks. "A patriot-ess?" she repeated, without answering.

Von Engel laughed with satisfaction. "That is good; you are still old-fashioned. You will have marriage, and to one man! I recollect you had a sweetheart in the army before Riga; that was he with you?"

"Yes, Herr Hauptmann."

"So he returned only yesterday. In the lists given me this morning of all who have come to town recently was one on furlough from the eastern army. A seditious lot, they are now; he will need watching, and he shall have it! So you have been waiting for him, *braves Mädchen!* Well, remain faithful! Ha-ha! How old are you now?"

"Twenty, Herr Hauptmann."

"A delightful age; I like it. But have you enough to eat? Let me see what you have in that tiny basket. How many in your

household? Five? I swear they should feed you better; the ethereal may be carried too far. I shall see that more is sent you. *Auf Wiederseh'n.* I go on! Remember to remain old-fashioned—ha-ha!—till I see you again! *Auf Wiederseh'n!*"

He squeezed her approvingly once more, released her and strode off. She remained standing, trembling, and gazing after him; he glanced back after he had gone several paces and saw her watching him. He laughed and went out of sight without again looking about. Hetty



Captain von Engel followed his gift the next forenoon. "You are even prettier, having dined properly," he complimented her and his generosity.

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turned with eyes wet to Joseph, who had come back to her side.

"I have endangered you," she said.

"I failed to protect you," he replied with a repressed quiet which had marked him this time that he was home. More than any bluster or boast, it made her fear for him.

"We must not be seen together," Hetty said, "or he will have you sent at once to the west front where the danger is greatest; that is the least! You have said so much since you have been home, Joseph. Some of it may come to him when he inquires; and he may do anything to you!"

"Because of you?"

"Yes, because of me!" She sobbed a little and wiped her eyes.

"I did not mean you were to blame,

Liebchen!" He caressed her. "I meant he would get me out of the way to obtain you!"

"We must go on quickly, if we go on together," she cried. "We do not know who watches us!" She started to run.

They found that the gate ahead was closed, and further on an order posted forbidding the passage across the Schloss park; but there was a man on guard who, after taking their names and addresses, let them out to the road which bounded the castle reserve on that side. Cottages and two-storied dwellings of the middle-class people extended along this road.

It was mid-February, with weather severe even for that season in Rhenish Hesse-Nassau. The white, heavy smoke of undried wood issued from such of the cottage chimneys as showed any fire at all, for days and weeks had passed since the last coal-distribution for house-heating. It had been forbidden, during the summer and autumn, to cut the trees of the Schloss wood for fires; indeed, the proscription still stood; but lately it had been disobeyed. People might suppose that the sudden forbidding of further passing through the woods was merely a result of their fagot-stealing, Hetty thought.

"Do not tell to anyone that our Kaiser comes to Ehernschloss," she warned Joseph. "Particularly do not say it to my father."

"Why not to him?" Joseph asked, surprised at her manner of speaking.

"Father has altered much in six months."

"Yes, Hetty; I saw that last night."

"He has altered more again since last night with all the things you told about our enemies—and ourselves."

"How has he altered?" Joseph demanded.

"So that he can no longer be counted upon for what he may do, Joseph. Remember, I pray you, do not let him learn that Ehernschloss again expects our Kaiser."

She was leading Joseph on to a two-storied house, a little larger than its immediate neighbors, which had a wing devoted to her father's home laboratory.

The windows of this wing were blank and cold; the whole front of the house was unheated and deserted. Hetty brought Joseph in the front door only to pass at once to the kitchen, where a fire was burning in the stove and where her father and sister were.

Her father, who had been a tall, erect and dignified man, was standing bent before the stove. When he looked up to see who had come in, it was with the piteous expectancy of a fond man who recently has lost dear ones whom he has not been able to abandon as dead.

Thrice in the last two years had he received the official notification that a son of his had given his life fighting for the Fatherland; Ernst Stroebel knew, therefore, that all his boys were dead; yet when a door opened, he could not conquer the surge of hope that one of them might appear. His dear wife Hedwig had died here in this house—"from natural causes,"

the doctor said, though the truth was that she had starved, her system unable to assimilate the new scientific diet of substitutes which somehow had kept life in the others. Stroebel had buried her; yet he found himself still expecting her also to appear again.

He saw that it was his "baby," his little Hetty, who had come in, and he called to her affectionately:

"My little Hetty!"

Then the draft following the opening of the door caused some smoke to escape into the room, and he coughed and choked pitifully, catching to a chair to hold himself up. His breath rasped and rattled in his ruined air-passages. Hetty ran to him, and unable to aid him, she hugged him in her arms, soothing and reassuring, until his breath came less torturingly. She got him seated in a chair, the sweat of the struggle for breath and the fear of death cold upon him.

"And when the voice of God," he wheezed to himself, "'and when at last the voice of God called to him, he saw himself alone upon the earth in the midst of phantoms, sad and beyond all number. And when the voice of God—'" he began over again.

"What is it?" Joseph whispered to Hetty

when she drew back to him.

"He is thinking of our Kaiser!" she answered. "It is the way Father has been for many months since Emil's death followed that of my other brothers, and my mother went, and he has been so weak. There was a drawing by Raemaekers which some one got to him and which he



"I have not dined differently from usual," Hetty desied him quietly.

kept, though it meant his death if anyone found it. The picture was the one, I think, which led to His Majesty's putting the price upon Raemaekers' head. It showed His Majesty at the moment of death, which had come to him suddenly; he was in uniform and helmet; and the moment before, there might have been many strong soldiers about him; but at the instant of death they all disappeared, and in their places appeared only the ghosts of the dead, old men and young, women and girls and little babies, all of whom had died through the war; and below was what Father has been saying: 'And when the voice of God called to him, he saw himself alone upon the earth in the midst of phantoms, sad and without number.'

Stroebe! was repeating it again when his daughter Luisa stopped him. She would have made a move to aid her father when he was struggling for breath had not her younger sister come. Luisa was not callous; but her strength was less than Hetty's. She had been married seven months before to Unteroffizier Rolf Sorge of the army facing the British in Flanders. For many weeks, on account of her approaching maternity, her portion of the family ration had been perhaps twice that of Hetty's; but Luisa had become gaunt, not ethereal. Her skin, instead of becoming delicately shell-like in pinkness, was yellow and dry; her deep blue eyes, very like Hetty's, had become too big; and her brown hair had lost all luster. It was long before Christmas when she last had heard from her husband; and if he had had furloughs, none had brought him home since summer.

"You looked at the casualty lists?" Luisa gazed from her sister to Joseph dully.

"Yes, Luisa," Hetty said. "And I stayed till I got near enough to read every name upon all—wounded and missing as well as killed. Rolf's name was not on any."

Luisa's eyes burned with resentment. "That means nothing! The casualty lists! They are weeks and months behind now, and falser than ever, too. Think of Ada Lund's husband! Had it not been Rolf's shovel which scraped the disk from his body in the mud, who would know about him yet? As far as the official lists say, he is alive yet; and Rolf found him months ago."

HETTY saw that her father's watery eyes stared pitiously at Luisa as she spoke; but Luisa did not notice. Like the many, many millions of her famishing sort, her whole thought had gone to food. "What did you get to-day?" she demanded, taking the market-basket from Hetty and turning out its miserable booty upon the table. She always said that she had ceased to expect sufficient and decent food and that she had become used to the brown lumps which now went for war-bread, the desiccated ounces of potato- or pea-meal or—on lucky days—some unidentifiable strip which might be horse-meat, or walrus brought down by the Swedes from the Arctic Sea; but always, when the daily dole arrived, she complained with violent bitterness. So now, wrapped in her own troubles, she noticed nothing unusual between her sister and Joseph; but Hetty was aware that her father's blood-shot eyes—his gas had had the double virtue of attacking eyes as well as lungs—watched her and Joseph ceaselessly. Several times he started to speak; but except for coughing, he remained silent and bent over until Luisa, her morning's energy spent, went to her room to rest.

"What threatens you two?" Stroebe! demanded then.

"Nothing, Papa."

"Say the truth to me, *Töchterlein*. I can observe; neither of you are as you were earlier!"

"No; we are not," Joseph put in. "A Captain von Engel stopped her—"

"Captain von Engel!" Stroebe! cried, straightening with a wince and standing up.

"He stopped Hetty, sending me on—" Joseph continued.

"So he is back, is he?" Stroebe! broke in again, swinging to Hetty.

"Yes, Papa."

"I see! What did he say to you? What has he done?" Stroebe! demanded fiercely when she hesitated.

"He's done nothing, Papa—only he said that he liked me very much."

"Ha!"

"And she was not to marry me!" Joseph finished.

"Ha! That is it, is it? I see! For Captain von Engel will be detained here awhile, and he approves of you, Hetty, my little daughter! Von Engel, the harbinger of His Majesty! The stormy petrel preceding the hurricanes of the All Highest!" His voice rose to a shrill crow, then cracked and broke to the wheeze. "So he is coming here again, the All Highest!" he cried, his fury transferred, with the sudden shift of rage, from von Engel to his master. "Our Kaiser hides at the Ehernschloss once more to rest while he sends his doubles out to endure danger for him and to fool his people. Well he knows he needs them! His enemies among his own people have become so many and so desperate that he must disarm, in these days, even his own soldiers who are not of his personal guard, when he passes. Yea! And in certain places he dare not go, even when all are disarmed. It is plain how it is! Here comes an eyewitness who has seen His Majesty. 'He looks scarcely as old as his age would suggest,' says this one. 'The complexion clear, the carriage erect, the step elastic, not the slightest indication of weariness.' That very week another interviews him elsewhere who finds him very gray and pale, much worn; a third testifies to an appearance in between."

"How is that? Well, it is known that even in times of peace he sometimes had the actor Schmalz to appear in places for him to save him inconveniences. Now, to save him from death, he requires not only Schmalz but two or three—perhaps a dozen—other doubles; who knows! So again he will be sending them around while he hides here! For his people, even on the Rhine, no longer are to be trusted!"

He hobbled to the table where Hetty had laid out the food. "It is not that sixty millions are brought to this or worse; it is not that I—and millions like myself, men and women, old and young—have the care of the authorities so long as we are strong and clever to devise new ways of slaughter, and when we cease to be of use are cast aside like dogs to starve. It is not that we are beginning to learn from events on the Russian front, and from the scraps of truth which such as Joseph bring us, how we were led into this war, how we who trusted and were patriotic were lied to, fooled and deceived to make ourselves infamous—"

"Papa!" Hetty cried. "Still yourself!"

STROEBEL laughed bitterly and coughed. "I am brave. I am I not, wheezing these things to my daughter and her sweetheart in my kitchen? Ah, well, I am not done yet! He shall see that I still have strength to strike—to strike for an end to the war and liberation of our people from this monstrous slaughter!"

"He, Papa? Whom do you mean?"

"His Majesty, our Kaiser—the All Highest War Lord! Look and see, Hetty, that your sister is asleep."

Hetty hesitated, trying to calm her father; then she went to Luisa's door; she closed it and returned.

"I will tell you about Rolf now," he said. "Rolf is not dead or captured or wounded; nor has he been. I have found out; he has merely 'married' once or twice more since last summer; nor was our Luisa his first wife. He had at least one woman earlier, still living!"

"My poor Luisa!" Hetty recoiled, flushing deep as she gazed from her father to Joseph.

"But I scarcely surprise you, I see," her father con-



The police searched the cottage where Joseph Bolland lived with his mother. Immediately Joseph received orders to present himself at the station for dispatch to the west front.

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...tained. “What Rolf has done to our Luisa is no longer a permissible crime; it has become honorable conduct, encouraged by the authorities in Germany to-day. I know that beyond doubt you, Joseph, have been instructed to do as he; I know that my little daughter here—my baby Hetty—has been exhorted by the state to become what we used to consider the lowest and most depraved of women, all in the name of patriotism. But they shall not touch her! They have taken my wife! They have taken my sons; my three boys sleep under the Flanders sod! They have ruined my elder daughter; my baby alone remains! They shall not have her, I say! Though there has come a condition of things where beasts like Captain von Engel may do, more than ever, what they wish, yet punishment shall be visited, I say. The penalty shall appear!”

He stood swaying and with his weak eyes streaming from his fury; then suddenly he left them and stumbled into his own room.

Hetty started after him; but as he shut his door, she turned back and gazed aghast at Joseph.

“My Hetty!” he cried to her, offering his arms.

“No—no!” She thrust him off, her blue eyes agonized with dread.

“My Hetty, what Rolf has done does not make you hate me?” he asked.

“Hate you, dear Joseph? I could never do that—nor distrust you! What a different man you have become from the boy that you were that day long ago, Joseph, when I kissed you so happily and you kissed me, and you first went away with them all singing, ‘Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles!’”

“Tell me all that troubles you, Hetty!”

“You have heard Father! Oh, I begged you not to let him learn that our Kaiser comes here. For Father, you see now, Father—” She was whispering and her voice failed.

“What, Hetty?”

"There is one," went on von Engel, "who puts upon us the problem of his removal."



"Father plans to kill him!"

"His Majesty?"

"Yes, Joseph. He has come to believe it

would end the war, end our misery, our starvation and bestiality, our—our—the sort of thing, Joseph, which he spoke about and we all know."

"The assassination of the Kaiser! Ending our troubles is not so simple as that. They will end, Hetty! Believe that! Revolt—revolution surely will come. But the assassination of the Kaiser would only deter it and do harm, not good."

"I'll tell Papa that!"

"To kill our Kaiser would be, indeed, the worst thing for us! I have heard it talked over many times, of course, among the Russians who seek revolution. Even they refuse it; at best, they say, it is the stroke of the weak, the impatient and the afraid."

"But that makes it my father's stroke, Joseph! He is very weak, and so near to death that he is impatient and afraid. One after one, he has seen us all go—my three brothers, my mother, now Luisa ruined, and me—me threatened while he is barely alive. And he has never been a man to do nothing. He cannot die without attempting some stroke in protest. You heard him when we came in, brooding—brooding as so many times before on the death of our Kaiser. He pictures His Majesty before him at the moment of death when the voice of God at last calls him and he is surrounded by the phantoms

of all who have gone in this war—my mother and brothers, my aunt and her sons and all the rest of the wraiths, sad and beyond number. And my father would be the voice of God to call our Kaiser and visit that upon him. 'T—the voice of God!' I have heard Papa whisper it again and again."

"But how could he strike, Hetty? He is a broken man."

"Yes; but he has slain, they say, two army corps of our enemies with substances they could not see or hear or smell or feel until it killed them. When our Kaiser comes here, could even His Majesty be safe? Oh, if Mamma were here, she would know what to say to him! Yet—oh, I would not call her back. No, I would not call any woman back to our country to-day! Oh, my poor, poor Luisa! Poor Papa!"

"At least, we can look out for him." Joseph comforted her with arms about her. "And von Engel shall not harm you!"

But she made excuse to send him away. What could Joseph do against Captain von Engel of the escort of His Majesty?

Joseph could only destroy himself without helping her; and Captain von Engel, she was well aware, was watching both Joseph and her now.

She got proof of that very soon after Joseph was gone, when she saw a man approaching the house from the direction of the Schloss. He proved to be one of the soldier servants, and he carried a basket heaped high with things, and of no little weight. When he reached the kitchen door and knocked, Hetty waited, trembling; then she went to the door and opened it.

"Compliments of Herr Hauptmann von Engel!" The soldier presented the basket. "Sausage, good bread, jelly, potted tongue," the man hungrily enumerated items of his burden.

"I cannot take it!" Hetty refused.

"The order, then, is to leave it," the soldier said; and he put the basket down in the snow and went off. Hetty left it there while she tried to think what best to do. She went to her room for a few moments during which she heard Luisa stirring and going to the kitchen. The outer door opened and shut, and Hetty in sudden alarm rushed back to the kitchen.

Her sister Luisa—gaunt, half-starved Luisa—had discovered the basket and brought it in. She had sat down with it in her lap while she snatched from it the delicate, well-flavored food which she devoured recklessly.

"Luisa!" Hetty cried in reproach. "What are you doing?"

"Food! Good food!" Luisa returned. "Good food! I found it!"

"You must not eat it!"

"Why?" Luisa continued to devour. "It was beside

our door. It is good—oh so, so good, Hetty! Here, have some; share it! Call Papa!"

Hetty drew back, refusing the food for herself; but she could not take it away from Luisa. Besides, all might as well be used as some. There was nothing to do now but to keep it.

CAPTAIN VON ENGEL followed his gift the next forenoon. He rang and knocked imperatively until Hetty, who happened to be alone in the house with her father, had to admit him.

"You are even prettier, having dined properly," he complimented her and his generosity, putting his hand upon her.

"I have not dined differently from usual," Hetty defied him quietly.

"So? Why not? You tell me my pig of a servant stole—"

"No," Hetty said. "He left all here; my family have appreciated your gift, Herr Hauptmann, but not I."

"So? You have been so well fed by others, perhaps?"

"No, Herr Hauptmann."

"Then why have you not eaten? To be insolent to me? Who is that there?" von Engel demanded at a sound from the rear. "That swinish sweetheart I've forbidden you?"

"My father, Herr Hauptmann."

"Where is he?"

"In the kitchen. He is not strong; that is where the fire is."

"Tell him to come here; and light that fire there." He motioned toward the fireplace where a fire was set.

"Yes, Herr Hauptmann."

Captain von Engel unbuttoned his coat and stood before the fire with his back to Hetty and to her father, who came in and stood waiting. Ostensibly von Engel was warming himself, oblivious of the chemist; in fact, he had glanced at Stroebel and was entirely given to thought about him. For von Engel's glance had discovered that Stroebel was a fated man and knew it; and von Engel had become uneasy in regard to fated men who knew their certain nearness to death.

"Good morning, Herr Stroebel." Von Engel turned abruptly. "You may go," he said to Hetty. "Close the door."

She went away; her father held himself up as erect as possible.

"I am glad to recovered," von

"I do well mann," Stroebel

see you are so well Engel complimented. enough, Herr Hauptmann. He forced

"I am brave, am I not, wheezing these things to my daughter and her sweetheart in my kitchen? He shall see that I still have strength to strike!"

himself to appear to feel flattered at a call from Captain von Engel.

"You are able to do a little work again, I hear," von Engel proceeded rapidly.

"Yes—a little, at times," admitted Stroebel.

"That is excellent. I hoped it was so. We need your aid again, Herr Stroebel."

"Yes, Herr Hauptmann?" Stroebel replied, watching von Engel more closely.

"I will tell you frankly; I know you always can be trusted implicitly," von Engel went on, with oily flattery.

"I have been, Herr Hauptmann," Stroebel replied quietly.

"Precisely! So the task is this: There are, as you surely know, several low persons who are taking the basest advantage of the present difficulties within the Empire to harass and embarrass our High Command."

Stroebel nodded patiently.

"Most of these may be disregarded," went on von Engel.

"Their influence quickly passes, or they may be punished with the severity which they merit. There is one of these Socialist-radical dog-swine who has been causing the greatest annoyance to the High Command and all loyal Germans like ourselves but who, because of the treacherous unrest of the low people, puts upon us the problem of his removal in such a manner that no one will suspect that he did not die—he is not a young man, so let us say—of heart failure. It is preferable, indeed, that death come upon him when he is alone and engaged in some such ordinary occupation as walking. He will be alone, yet within the observation of others, perhaps; he will fall dead without the suspicion of violence. You are able to follow me?"

"Quite easily, Herr Hauptmann," Stroebel assured.

"The responsibility was given me to select the investigator-chemist who could be trusted with so extraordinarily delicate an operation. If Ernst Stroebel, I said, retains but a part of his powers which gave us that gas which saved many army corps to our High Command, this task is nothing to him. But perhaps I have underestimated the difficulties; what is required may be impossible."

"Not impossible, not impossible at all, Herr Hauptmann! Entirely attainable, I assure you!"

Von Engel smiled.

"Very well; we shall see." And he turned away with satisfaction.

He had put the matter just right, he flattered himself.

Not only had he assigned the task to one who was master of death-doses of extreme subtlety, but he had brought to a despairing man the inspiration of a call from his Fatherland which he had faithfully served.

Stroebel, holding composure with (Continued on page 109)





A Complete Résumé of
the Earlier Chapters of
**THE VALLEY OF
THE GIANTS**

JOHAN CARDIGAN landed from a topsail schooner on a lonely California beach in 1850 and plunged into the wilderness to seek his fortune. He found it in the mighty redwood forests of Humboldt County. His was the first sawmill in all that region; about it grew up the town of Sequoia.

Late in life Cardigan married the daughter of a sea-captain. For a time life smiled on him; and then, after the birth of her son, his wife died.

Some hours later John Cardigan took his woods-boss McTavish with him to a little amphitheater in the forest, surrounded by a wall of redwoods of such dimensions that even the woods-boss was struck with wonder. Against the prevailing twilight of the surrounding forest the sunlight descended like a halo, and where it struck the ground, John Cardigan paused.

"Take two men from the section-gang, McTavish," he ordered, "and have them dig her grave here. She loved this spot, McTavish, and she called the valley her Valley of the Giants. She was like this sunbeam, McTavish."

John Cardigan's son Bryce grew to a fine young manhood in Sequoia, and then his father sent him away to Princeton to finish his education. Meanwhile Cardigan exhausted his timber near Sequoia and moved his woods-crew to a block of timber he owned on the San Hedrin River. He planned to float his logs down the river at the time of high water, but the freshest carried the logs far out across Humboldt Bar and many were taken out to sea by the tide.

When Bryce arrived at Red Bluff, on his home-coming, Shirley Sumner, the attractive niece of Colonel Pennington, got off the same train; and so the two made the long motor-trip to Sequoia together.

Bryce found his father grief-stricken—and nearly blind.

"Sonny," cried the old man, "—oh, I'm so glad you're back! I've missed you. Bryce, I'm whipped. I've lost your heritage, your redwood trees—even your mother's Valley of the Giants."

Next day old John explained to Bryce what had happened. When the logging down the San Hedrin River had proved a failure, Cardigan had abandoned work on his holdings there until the coming of the railroad should make it more feasible. And in order to continue his business, he had bought six thousand acres on the other side of Sequoia in Township Nine. Next to this land his friend Bill Henderson had owned a block of redwood land. And with Cardigan he had made a deal: Cardigan had loaned Henderson money to build a logging railroad and had provided him with a mill-site. In return Henderson had contracted to haul Cardigan's logs at a specified rate for ten years.

But Henderson had died. And his sons had sold land, railroad and contract to a newcomer, Colonel Pennington, who hated Cardigan and planned to freeze him out. Pennington was hauling Cardigan's logs as dilatorily as possible; and he refused to renew the contract. So now, with the San Hedrin property proved unavailable and without sufficient funds to build a railroad of their own, the Cardigans faced ruin.

Bryce immediately took over the business from his nearly blind father, discharged the drunken old woods-boss McTavish and gave his daughter Moira a position in the office.

Then one day, on a visit to the Valley of the Giants, Bryce found a giant redwood felled by vandal hands, crushing his mother's gravestone. The purpose had apparently been the

theft of a burl—an eccentric growth on the tree valued highly.


Bryce shrewdly guessed the burl had been stolen by Rondeau, Pennington's woods-boss, for his employer. And when a day or two later he dined at Pennington's at Shirley's invitation and saw the burl panels of the dining-room, he was certain—and he hinted to the Colonel that he intended "taking Rondeau apart to see what makes him go." Next morning he called at Pennington's office and asked for a renewal of the log-hauling contract. The Colonel refused. Bryce then directly accused Pennington of knowing Rondeau had stolen the burl-redwood for him. The Colonel denied it, ordered Bryce from his office—and forbade his future acquaintance with Miss Sumner.

Next afternoon Bryce went to Pennington's camp—whither the Colonel and Shirley Sumner had come also. Promptly Bryce sought out and attacked Rondeau. Young Cardigan's boxing tactics were winning against the rough-and-tumble fighter when Pennington, standing behind Bryce, shoved him forward into the woods-boss' grip. But Bryce crippled Rondeau with a wrist-lock and forced him to confess that he had stolen the burl.

In a Berserk rage, Bryce picked up the woods-boss and hurled him bodily at Pennington, knocking the Colonel flat and breathless. Shirley Sumner ran forward and knelt over her uncle. "You coward!" she cried to Bryce. "I'll never speak to you again as long as I live."

The rest of the woods-crew attacked Bryce, but he drove them off with an ax. Later, riding back on the log-train, Shirley and her uncle were in the caboose,—Bryce found the train had broken away from its engine and was running away down the steep grade. At great risk, Bryce succeeded in cutting loose the caboose and stopping it with the brakes before the rest of the train ahead left the tracks and plunged to destruction.

SHIRLEY expressed her gratitude to Bryce and tried to be friendly again, but because of his enmity for Pennington and because of his risky financial position, Bryce did not permit himself to respond in kind. This financial situation was indeed desperate. Bryce contrived to borrow money for running expenses from Pennington's bank, but he knew the Colonel was only allowing the Cardigans more rope with which to hang themselves. And when old John Cardigan at last gave in and offered to sell the Valley of the Giants to Pennington, that wily old fox withdrew his offer. Bryce, however, went to San Francisco and came back with hope. For one Gregory, the Scotch president of the Trinidad Lumber Company, which owned redwood land beyond the Cardigan and Pennington holdings in Township Nine, had consented to lend him money with which to build a railroad paralleling Pennington's, provided the Cardigans would haul the Trinidad logs to Sequoia on it and provide them with a mill-site. And then another miracle happened: one Judge Moore on behalf of an anonymous client, offered a hundred thousand dollars for the Valley of the Giants, and the deal was closed.



*The novel which Mr. Kyne has always
a vigorous American romance of the*

*wanted to write:
great redwood forests.*

The VALLEY of the GIANTS

By PETER B. KYNE

Illustrated by DEAN CORNWELL

CHAPTER XX

NOT the least of the traits which formed Shirley Sumner's character was pride. Proud people quite usually are fiercely independent and meticulously honest—and Shirley's pride was monumental. Hers was the pride of lineage, of womanhood, of an assured station in life, combined with that other pride which is rather difficult of definition without verbosity and is perhaps better expressed in the terse and illuminating phrase "a dead-game sport." Unlike her precious relative, unlike the majority of her sex, Shirley had a wonderfully balanced sense of the eternal fitness of things; her code of honor resembled that of a very gallant gentleman. She could love well and hate well.

A careful analysis of Shirley's feelings toward Bryce Cardigan immediately following the incident in Pennington's woods, had showed her that under more propitious circumstances she might have fallen in love with that tempestuous young man in sheer recognition of the many lovable and manly qualities she had discerned in him. As an offset to the credit side of Bryce's account with her, however, there appeared certain debits in the consideration of which Shirley always lost her temper and was immediately quite certain she loathed the unfortunate man.

He had been an honored and (for aught Shirley knew to the contrary) welcome guest in the Pennington home one night, and the following day had assaulted his host, committed great bodily injuries upon the latter's employees for little or no reason save the satisfaction of an abominable temper, made threats of further violence, declared his unflinching enmity to her nearest and best-loved relative, and in the next breath had had the insolence to prate of his respect and admiration for her. Indeed, in cogitating on this latter incongruity, Shirley recalled that the extraordinary fellow had been forced rather abruptly to check himself in order to avoid a fervid declaration of love! And all of this under the protection of a double-bitted ax, one eye on her and the other on his enemies.

However, all of these grave crimes and misdemeanors were really insignificant compared with his crowning offense. What had infuriated Shirley was the fact that

she had been at some pains to inform Bryce Cardigan that she loathed him—whereat he had looked her over coolly, grinned a little and declined to believe her! Then, seemingly as if fate had decreed that her futility should be impressed upon her still further, Bryce Cardigan had been granted an opportunity to save, in a strikingly calm, heroic and painful manner, her and her uncle from certain and horrible death, thus placing upon Shirley an obligation that was as irritating to acknowledge as it was futile to attempt to reciprocate.

That was where the shoe pinched. Before that day was over she had been forced to do one of two things—acknowledge in no uncertain terms her indebtedness to him, or remain silent and be convicted of having been, in plain language, a rotter. So she had telephoned him and purposely left ajar the door to their former friendly relations.

Monstrous! He had seen the open door and deliberately slammed it in her face. Luckily for them both she had heard, all unsuspected by him as he slowly hung the receiver on the hook, the soliloquy wherein he gave her a pointed hint of the distress with which he abdicated—which knowledge was all that deterred her from despising him with the fervor of a woman scorned.

RESOLUTELY Shirley set herself to the task of forgetting Bryce when, after the passage of a few weeks, she realized that he was quite sincere in his determination to forget her. Frequent glimpses of him on the streets of Sequoia, the occasional mention of his name in *The Sequoia Sentinel*, the very whistle of Cardigan's mill, made her task a difficult one; and presently in desperation she packed up and departed for an indefinite stay in the southern part of the State. At the end of six weeks, however, she discovered that absence had had the traditional effect upon her heart and found herself possessed of a great curiosity to study the villain at short range and discover, if possible, what new rascality he might be meditating. About this time, a providential attack of that aristocratic ailment, gout, having laid Colonel Pennington low, she told herself her duty lay in Sequoia, that she had Shirley Sumner in hand at last and that the danger was over. In consequence, she returned to Sequoia.

The fascination which a lighted candle holds for a moth is too well known to require further elucidation here. In yielding one day to a desire to visit the Valley of the Giants, Shirley told herself that she was going there to gather wild blackberries. She had been thinking of a certain blackberry-pie, which thought naturally induced reflection on Bryce Cardigan and reminded Shirley of her first visit to the Giants under the escort of a boy in knickerbockers. She had a very vivid remembrance of that little amphitheater with the sunbeams falling like a halo on the plain tombstone; she wondered if the years had changed it all and decided that there could not possibly be any harm in indulging a very natural curiosity to visit and investigate.

HER meeting with Moira McTavish that day, and the subsequent friendship formed with the woods-boss' daughter, renewed all her old apprehensions. On the assumption that Shirley and Bryce were practically strangers to each other (an assumption which Shirley, for obvious reasons, did not attempt to dissipate), Moira did not hesitate to mention Bryce very frequently. To her he was the one human being in the world utterly worth while, and it is natural for women to discuss, frequently and at great length, the subject nearest their hearts. In the three stock subjects of the admirable sex—man, dress and the ills that flesh is heir to—man readily holds the ascendancy; and by degrees Moira—discovering that Shirley, having all the dresses she required (several dozen more, in fact) and being neither subnormal mentally nor fragile physically, gave the last two topics scant attention—formed the habit of expatiating at great length on the latter. Moira described Bryce in minute detail and related to her eager auditor little unconscious daily acts of kindness, thoughtfulness or humor performed by Bryce—his devotion to his father, his idealistic attitude toward the Cardigan employees, his ability, his industry, the wonderful care he bestowed upon his fingernails, his marvelous taste in neckwear, the boyishness of his lighter and the mannishness of his serious moments. And presently, little by little, Shirley's resentment against him faded, and in her heart was born a great wistfulness bred of the hope that some day she would meet Bryce Cardigan on the street and that he would pause, lift his hat, smile at her his compelling smile and forthwith proceed to bully her into being friendly and forgiving—browbeat her into admitting her change of heart and glorying in it.

To this remarkable state of mind had Shirley Sumner attained at the time old John Cardigan, leading his last little trump in a vain hope that it would enable him to take the odd trick in the huge game he had played for fifty years, decided to sell his Valley of the Giants.

Shortly after joining her uncle in Sequoia, Shirley had learned from the Colonel the history of old man Cardigan and his Valley of the Giants, or as the townspeople called it, Cardigan's Redwoods. Therefore she was familiar with its importance to the assets of the Laguna Grande Lumber Company, since, while that quarter-section remained the property of John Cardigan, two thousand five hundred acres of splendid timber owned by the former were rendered inaccessible. Her uncle had explained to her that ultimately this would mean the tying up of some two million dollars, and inasmuch as the Colonel never figured less than five per cent return on anything, he was in this instance facing a net loss of one hundred thousand dollars for each year obstinate John Cardigan persisted in retaining that quarter-section.

"I'd gladly give him a hundred thousand for that miserable little dab of timber and let him keep a couple of acres surrounding his wife's grave, if the old fool would only listen to reason," the Colonel had complained bitterly to her. "I've offered him that price a score of

times, and he tells me blandly the property isn't for sale. Well, he who laughs last laughs best, and if I can't get that quarter-section by paying more than ten times what it's worth in the open market, I'll get it some other way, if it costs me a million."

"How?" Shirley had queried at the time.

"Never mind, my dear," he had answered darkly. "You wouldn't understand the procedure if I told you. I'll have to run all around Robin Hood's barn and put up a deal of money, one way or another, but in the end I'll get it all back with interest—and Cardigan's Redwoods! The old man can't last forever, and what with his fool methods of doing business, he's about broke, anyhow. I expect to do business with his executor or his receiver within a year."

Shirley, as explained in a preceding chapter, had been present the night John Cardigan, desperate and brought to bay at last, had telephoned Pennington at the latter's home, accepting Pennington's last offer for the Valley of the Giants. The cruel triumph in the Colonel's handsome face as he curtly rebuffed old Cardigan had been too apparent for the girl to mistake; recalling her conversation with him anent the impending possibility of his doing business with John Cardigan's receiver or executor, she realized now that a crisis had come in the affairs of the Cardigans, and across her vision there flashed again the vision of Bryce Cardigan's homecoming—of a tall old man with his trembling arms clasped around his boy, with grizzled cheek laid against his son's, as one who, seeking comfort through bitter years, at length had found it.

Presently another thought came to Shirley. She knew Bryce Cardigan was far from being indifferent to her; she had given him his opportunity to be friendly with her again, and he had chosen to ignore her, though sorely against his will. For weeks Shirley had pondered this mysterious action, and now she thought she caught a glimpse of the reason underlying it all. In Sequoia, Bryce Cardigan was regarded as the heir to the throne of Humboldt's first timber-king, but Shirley knew now that as a timber-king, Bryce Cardigan bade fair to wear a tinny crown. Was it this knowledge that had led him to avoid her?

"I wonder," she mused. "He's proud. Perhaps the realization that he will soon be penniless and short of his high estate has made him chary of acquiring new friends in his old circle. Perhaps if he were secure in his business affairs—Ah, yes! Poor boy! He was desperate for fifty thousand dollars!" Her heart swelled. "Oh, Bryce, Bryce," she murmured, "I think I'm beginning to understand some of your fury that day in the woods. It's all a great mystery, but I'm sure you didn't intend to be so—so terrible. Oh, my dear, if we had only continued to be the good friends we started out to be, perhaps you'd let me help you now. For what good is money if one cannot help one's dear friends in distress. Still, I know you wouldn't let me help you, for men of your stamp cannot borrow from a woman, no matter how desperate their need. And yet—you only need a paltry fifty thousand dollars!"

SHIRLEY carried to bed with her that night the news of the Cardigans, and in the morning she telephoned Moira McTavish and invited the latter to lunch with her at home that noon. It was in her mind to question Moira with a view to acquiring additional information. When Moira came, Shirley saw that she had been weeping.

"My poor Moira!" she said, putting her arms around her visitor. "What has happened to distress you? Has your father come back to Sequoia? Forgive me for asking. You never mentioned him, but I have heard—There, there, dear! Tell me all about it."

Moira laid her head on Shirley's shoulder and sobbed for several minutes. Then, "It's Mr. Bryce," she wailed.

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"I'd gladly die for him," Moira answered simply. "Oh, Miss Shirley, you don't know him the way we who work for him do. If you did, you'd love him too. You couldn't help it, Miss Shirley."

"He's so unhappy. Something's happened; they're going to sell Cardigan's Redwoods; and they—don't want to. Old Mr. Cardigan is home-ill; and just before I left the office, Mr. Bryce came in—and stood a moment looking—at me—so tragically I—I asked him what had happened. Then he patted my cheek—oh, I know I'm just one of his responsibilities—and said 'Poor Moira! Never any luck!' and went into his—private office. I waited a little, and then I went in too; and—oh, Miss Sumner, he had his head down on his desk, and when I touched his head, he reached up and took my hand and held it—and laid his cheek against it a little while—and oh, his cheek was wet. It's cruel of God—to make him—unhappy. He's good—too good. And—oh, I love him so, Miss Shirley, I love him so—and he'll never, never know. I'm just one of his—responsibilities, you know; and I shouldn't presume. But nobody—has ever been kind to me but Mr. Bryce—and you. And I can't help loving people who are kind—and gentle to nobodies."

The hysterical outburst over, Shirley led the girl to her cozy sitting-room upstairs and prevailed upon the girl to put on one of her own beautiful negligees. Moira's story—her confession of love, so tragic because so hopeless—had stirred Shirley deeply. She seated herself in front of Moira and cupped her chin in her palm.

"Of course, dear," she said, "you couldn't possibly see anybody you loved suffer so and not feel dreadfully about it. And when a man like Bryce Cardigan is struck down, he's apt to present rather a tragic and helpless figure. He wanted sympathy, Moira—woman's sympathy, and it was dear of you to give it to him."

"I'd gladly die for him," Moira answered simply. "Oh, Miss Shirley, you don't know him the way we who work for him do. If you did, you'd love him too. You couldn't help it, Miss Shirley."

"Perhaps he loves you too, Moira." The words came with difficulty.

Moira shook her head hopelessly. "No, Miss Shirley. I'm only one of his many human problems, and he just wont go back on me, for old sake's sake. We played together ten years ago, when he used to spend his vacations at our house in Cardigan's woods, when my father was woods-boss. He's Bryce Cardigan—and I—I used to work in the kitchen of his logging-camp."

"Never mind, Moira. He may love you, even though you do not suspect it. You mustn't be so despairing. Providence has a way of working out these things. Tell me about his trouble, Moira."

"I think it's money. He's been terribly worried for a long time, and I'm afraid things aren't going right with the business. I've felt ever since I've been there that there's something that puts a cloud over Mr. Bryce's smile. It hurts them terribly to have to sell the Valley of the Giants, but they have to; Colonel Pennington is the only one who would consider buying it; they don't want him to have it—and still they have to sell to him."

"I happen to know, Moira, that he isn't going to buy it."

"Yes, he is—but not at a price that will do them any good. They have always thought he would be eager to buy whenever they decided to sell, and now he says he doesn't want it, and old Mr. Cardigan is ill over it all. Mr. Bryce says his father has lost his courage at last; and oh, dear, things are in such a mess. Mr. Bryce started to tell me all about it—and then he stopped suddenly and wouldn't say another word."

SHIRLEY smiled. She thought she understood the reason for that. However, she did not pause to speculate on it, since the crying need of the present was the distribution of a ray of sunshine to broken-hearted Moira.

"Silly," she chided, "how needlessly you are grieving! You say my uncle has declined to buy the Valley of the Giants?"

Moira nodded.

"My uncle doesn't know what he's talking about, Moira. I'll see that he does buy it. What price are the Cardigans asking for it now?"

"Well, Colonel Pennington has offered them a hundred thousand dollars for it time and again, but last night he withdrew that offer. Then they named a price of fifty thousand, and he said he didn't want it at all."

"He needs it, and it's worth every cent of a hundred thousand to him, Moira. Don't worry, dear. He'll buy it, because I'll make him, and he'll buy it immediately, only you must promise me not to mention a single word of what I'm telling you to Bryce Cardigan, or in fact, to anybody. Do you promise?"

Moira seized Shirley's hand and kissed it impulsively. "Very well, then," Shirley continued. "That matter is adjusted, and now we'll all be happy. Here comes Thelma with luncheon. Cheer up, dear, and remember that sometime this afternoon you're going to see Mr. Bryce smile again, and perhaps there won't be so much of a cloud over his smile this time."

WHEN Moira returned to the office of the Cardigan Redwood Lumber Company, Shirley rang for her maid. "Bring me my motor-coat and hat, Thelma," she ordered, "and telephone for the limousine." She seated herself before the mirror at her dressing-table and dusted her adorable nose with a powder-puff. "Mr. Smarty Cardigan," she murmured happily, "you walked roughshod over my pride, didn't you! Placed me under an obligation I could never hope to meet—and then ignored me—didn't you? Very well, old boy. We all have our innings sooner or later, you know, and I'm going to make a substantial payment on that huge obligation as sure as my name is Shirley Sumner. Then, some day when the sun is shining for you again, you'll come to me and be very, very humble. You're entirely too independent, Mr. Cardigan, but oh, my dear, I do hope you will not need so much money. I'll be put to my wits end to get it to you without letting you know, because if your affairs go to smash, you'll be perfectly intolerable. And you deserve it. You're such an idiot for not loving Moira. She's an angel, and I greatly fear I'm just an interfering, mischievous, resentful little devil seeking vengeance on—"

She paused suddenly. "No, I'll not do that, either," she soliloquized. "I'll keep it myself—for an investment. I'll show Uncle Seth I'm a business woman, after all. He has had his fair chance at the Valley of the Giants after waiting years for it, and now he has deliberately sacrificed that chance to be mean and vindictive. I'm afraid Uncle Seth isn't very sporty—after what Bryce Cardigan did for us that day the log-train ran away. I'll have to teach him not to hit an old man when he's down and begging for mercy. I'll buy the Valley but keep my identity secret from everybody; then, when Uncle Seth finds a stranger in possession, he'll have a fit, and perhaps, before he recovers, he'll sell me all his Squaw Creek timber—only he'll never know I'm the buyer. And when I control the outlet—well, I think that Squaw Creek timber will make an excellent investment if it's held for a few years. Shirley, my dear, I'm pleased with you. Really, I never knew until now why men could be so devoted to business. Wont it be jolly to step in between Uncle Seth and Bryce Cardigan, hold up my hand like a policeman and say: 'Stop it, boys. No fighting, if you please. And if anybody wants to know who's boss around here, start something.'"

And Shirley laid her head upon the dressing-table and laughed heartily. She had suddenly bethought herself of Aesop's fable of the lion and the mouse!

When her uncle came home that night, Shirley observed that he was preoccupied and disinclined to conversation.

"No such luck!" he almost barked. "I'm an idiot. I should be placed in charge of a keeper."

"Ino-
ticed in
this eve-
ning's
paper," she
remarked
presently,
"that Mr. Car-
digan has sold
his Valley of
the Giants. So
you bought it,
after all?"

"No such
luck!" he almost
barked. "I'm an
idiot. I should be
placed in charge of
a keeper. Now, for
heaven's sake, Shirley,
don't discuss that tim-
ber with me, for if you
do, I'll go plain, lunatic
crazy. I've had a very
trying day."

"Poor Uncle Seth!"
she purred sweetly. Her
apparent sympathy
soothed his rasped soul.
He continued:

"Oh, I'll get the in-
fernal property, and it
will be worth what I have to pay
for it, only it certainly does
gravel me to realize that I am
about to be held up, with no
help in sight. I'll see Judge
Moore to-morrow and offer
him a quick profit for his
client. That's the game, you
know."

"I do hope the new owner
exhibits some common sense,
Uncle dear," she replied, and
turned back to the piano.
"But I greatly fear," she added
to herself, "that the new owner is
going to prove a most obstinate creature
and frightfully hard to discover."

True to his promise, the Colonel
called on Judge Moore bright and
early the following morning. "Act
Three of that little business drama
entitled 'The Valley of the Giants,'
my dear Judge," he announced pleasantly.

"I play the lead in this act. You remem-
ber me, I hope. I played a bit in Act Two."

"In so far as my information goes, sir, you've
been cut out of the cast in Act Three. I don't
seem to find any lines for you to speak."

"One line, Judge, one little line. What
profit does your client want on that quarter-
section?"

"That quarter-section is not in the market,
Colonel. When it is, I'll send for you, since
you're the only logical prospect should my
client decide to sell. And remembering how
you butted in on politics in this county last
fall and provided a slush-fund to beat me and
place a crook on the Superior Court bench, in
order to give you an edge in the many suits
you are always filing or having filed against
you, I rise to remark that you have about
ten split seconds in which to disappear from
my office. If you linger longer, I'll start
throwing paper-weights." And as if to em-
phasize his remark, the Judge's hand closed
over one of the articles in question.

The Colonel withdrew with what dig-
nity he could muster.

CHAPTER XXI

UPON his return from the of-
fice that night, Bryce Cardi-
gan found his father had left his bed
and was seated before the library
fire.

"Feeling a whole lot better to-day,
eh, pal?" his son queried.

John Cardigan smiled. "Yes, son,"
he replied plaintively. "I guess I'll
manage to live till next spring."

"Oh, I knew there was nothing
wrong with you, John Cardi-
gan, that a healthy check
wouldn't cure. Pen-
nington rather jolted
you, though, didn't
he?"

"He did, Bryce. It
was jolt enough to be
forced to sell that quar-
ter—I never expected
we'd have to do it; but
when I realize that it
was a case of sacrificing
you or my Giants, of
course you won. And
I didn't feel so badly
about it as I used to
think I would. I sup-
pose that's because there
is a certain morbid pleas-
ure in a real sacrifice for
those we love. And I
never doubted but that
Pennington would snap up
the property the instant
I offered to sell. Hence
his refusal—in the face of

our desperate need for money to carry on until conditions improve—almost floored your old man."

"Well, we can afford to draw our breath now, and that gives us a fighting chance, partner. And right after dinner you and I will sit us down and start brewing a pot of powerful bad medicine for the Colonel."

"Son, I've been sitting here simmering all day." There was a note of the old dominant fighting John Cardigan in his voice now. "And it has occurred to me that even if I must sit on the bench and root, I've not reached the point where my years have begun to affect my thinking ability." He touched his leonine head. "I'm as right as a fox upstairs, Bryce."

"Right-o, Johnny. We'll buck the line together. After dinner you trot out your plan of campaign and I'll trot out mine; then we'll tear them apart, select the best pieces of each and weld them into a perfect whole."

ACCORDINGLY, dinner disposed of, father and son sat down together to prepare the plan of campaign. For the space of several minutes a silence settled between them, the while they puffed meditatively upon their cigars. Then the old man spoke.

"We'll have to fight him in the dark."

"Why?"

"Because if Pennington knows, or even suspects the identity of the man who is going to parallel his logging-railroad, he will throw all the weight of his truly capable mind, his wealth and his ruthlessness against you—and you will be smashed. To beat that man, you must do more than spend money. You will have to outthink him, outwork him, outgame him; and when eventually you have won, you'll know you've been in the fight of your career. You have one advantage starting out. The Colonel doesn't think you have the courage to parallel his road in the first place; in the second place, he knows you haven't the money; and in third place he is morally certain you cannot borrow it, because you haven't any collateral to secure your note."

"We are mortgaged now to the limit, and our floating indebtedness is very large; on the face of things and according to the Colonel's very correct inside information, we're helpless; and unless the lumber-market stiffens very materially this year, by the time our hauling-contract with Pennington's road expires, we'll be back where we were yesterday before we sold the Giants. Pennington regards that hundred thousand as get-away money for us. So, all things considered, the Colonel will be slow to suspect us of having an ace in the hole; but by jinks we have it, and we're going to play it."

"No," said Bryce, "we're going to let somebody else play it for us. The point you make—to-wit, that we must remain absolutely in the background—is well taken."

"Very well," agreed the old man. "Now let us proceed to the next point. You must engage some reliable engineer to look over the proposed route of the road and give us an estimate of the cost of construction."

"For the sake of argument we will consider that done, and that the estimate comes within the scope of the sum Gregory is willing to advance us."

"Your third step, then, will be to incorporate a railroad company under the laws of the State of California."

"I think I'll favor the fair State of New Jersey with our trade," Bryce suggested dryly. "I notice that when Pennington bought out the Henderson interests and reorganized that property, he incorporated the Laguna Grande Lumber Company under the laws of the State of New Jersey, home of the trusts. There must be some advantage connected with such a course."

"Have it your own way, boy. What's good enough for the Colonel is good enough for us. Now, then, you are going to incorporate a company to build a road twelve miles long—and a private road, at that. That would be a

fatal step. Pennington would know somebody was going to build a logging-road, and regardless of who the builders were, he would have to fight them in self-protection. How are you going to cover your trail, my son?"

BRYCE pondered. "I will, to begin, have a dummy board of directors. Also, my road cannot be private; it must be a common carrier, and that's where the shoe pinches. Common carriers are subject to the rules and regulations of the Railroad Commission."

"They are wise and just rules," commented the old man, "—expensive to obey at times, but quite necessary. We can obey and still be happy. Objection overruled."

"Well, then, since we must be a common carrier, we might as well carry our deception still further and incorporate for the purpose of building a road from Sequoia to Grant's Pass, Oregon, there to connect with the Southern Pacific."

John Cardigan smiled. "The old dream revived, eh? Well, the old jokes always bring a hearty laugh. People will laugh at your company, because folks up this way realize that the construction-cost of such a road is prohibitive, not to mention the cost of maintenance, which would be tremendous and out of all proportion to the freight area tapped."

"Well, since we're not going to build more than twelve miles of our road during the next year, and probably not more than ten miles additional during the present century, we won't worry over it. It doesn't cost a cent more to procure a franchise to build a road from here to the moon. If we fail to build to Grant's Pass, our franchise to build the uncompleted portion of the road merely lapses and we hold only that portion which we have constructed. That's all we want to hold."

"How about rights of way?"

"They will cost us very little, if anything. Most of the landowners along the proposed route will give us rights of way free gratis and for nothing, just to encourage the lunatics. Without a railroad the land is valueless; and as a common carrier they know we can condemn rights of way capriciously withheld—something we cannot do as a private road. Moreover, deeds to rights of way can be drawn with a time-limit, after which they revert to the original owners."

"Good strategy, my son! And certainly as a common carrier we will be welcomed by the farmers and cattlemen along our short line. We can handle their freight without much annoyance and perhaps at a slight profit."

"Well, that about completes the rough outline of our plan. The next thing to do is to start and keep right on moving, for as old Omar has it, 'The bird of time hath but a little way to flutter,' and the birdshot is catching up with him. We have a year in which to build our road; if we do not hurry, the mill will have to shut down for lack of logs, when our contract with Pennington expires."

"You forget the manager for our new corporation—the vice-president and general manager. The man we engage must be the fastest and most convincing talker in California; not only must he be able to tell a lie with a straight face, but he must be able to believe his own lies. And he must talk in millions, look millions and act as if a million dollars were equivalent in value to a redwood stump. In addition he must be a man of real ability and a person you can trust implicitly."

"I have the very man you mention. His name is Buck Ogilvy and only this very day I received a letter from him begging me for a small loan. I have Buck on ice in a fifth-class San Francisco hotel."

"Tell me about him, Bryce."

"Don't have to. You've just told me about him. However, I'll read you his letter. I claim there is more character in a letter than in a face."

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He pressed forward and thrust forth a great speckled paw for Bryce to shake. Bryce ignored it. "Why, don't you remember me?" Ogilvy demanded. Bryce looked him in the eye and favored him with a wink. "I have never heard of you, Mr. Ogilvy. You are mistaking me for some one else."

HERE Bryce read aloud:

"Golden Gate Hotel—Rooms fifty cents—and up.

"San Francisco, California, August fifteenth, 1916.

"My dear Cardigan: Hark to the voice of one crying in the wilderness; then picture to yourself the unlovely spectacle of a strong man crying.

"Let us assume that you have duly considered. Now wind up your wrist and send me a rectangular piece of white, blue, green or pink paper bearing in the lower right-hand corner, in your clear, bold chirography, the magic words "*Bryce Cardigan*"—with the little up-and-down hook and flourish which identifies your signature given in your serious moods and lends value to otherwise worthless paper. Five dollars would make me chirk up; ten would start a slight smile; twenty would put a beam in mine eye; fifty would cause me to utter shrill cries of unadulterated joy; and a hundred would inspire me to actions like unto those of a whirling dervish.

"I am so flat busted my arches make hollow sounds as I tread the hard pavements of a great city, seeking a job. Pausing on the brink of despair, that destiny which shapes our ends inspired me to think of old times and happier days and particularly of that pink-and-white midget of a girl who tended the soda-fountain just back of the railroad station at Princeton. You stole that damsel from me, and I never thanked you. Then I remembered you were a timber-king with a kind heart and that you lived somewhere in California; so I looked in the telephone-book and found the address of the San Francisco office of the Cardigan Redwood Lumber Company. You have a mean man in charge there. I called on him, told him I was an old college pal of yours and tried to borrow a dollar. He spurned me with contumely—so much of it, in fact, that I imagine you have a number of such friends. While he was abusing me, I stole from his desk the stamped envelope which bears to you these tidings of great woe; and while awaiting your reply, be advised that I subsist on the bitter cud of reflection, fresh air and water, all of which, thank God, cost nothing.

"My tale is soon told. When you knew me last, I was a prosperous young contractor. Alas! I put all my eggs in one basket and produced an omelet. Took a contract to build a railroad in Honduras. Honduras got to fighting with Nicaragua; the government I had done business with went out of business; and the Nicaraguan army recruited all my laborers and mounted them on my mules and horses, swiped all my grub and told me to go home. I went. Why stay? Moreover, I had an incentive consisting of about an inch of bayonet,—fortunately not applied in a vital spot,—which accelerated rather than decreased my speed.

"Hurry, my dear Cardigan. Tempest fidgets; remember Moriarity—which, if you still remember your Latin, means: "Time flies. Remember to-morrow!" I finished eating my overcoat the day before yesterday.

"Make it a hundred, and God will bless you. When I get it, I'll come to Sequoia and kiss you. I'll pay you back sometime—of course.

"Wistfully thine—Buck Ogilvy.

"P. S.—Delays are dangerous, and procrastination is the thief of time.—B."

John Cardigan chuckled. "I'd take Buck Ogilvy, Bryce. He'll do. Is he honest?"

"I don't know. He was, the last time I saw him."

"Then wire him a hundred. Don't wait for the mail. The steamer that carries your letter might be wrecked and your friend Ogilvy forced to steal."

"I have already wired him the hundred. In all probability he is now out whirling like a dervish."

"Good boy! Well, I think we've planned sufficient for the present, Bryce. You'd better leave for San Francisco to-morrow and close your deal with Gregory. Arrange with him to leave his own representative with Ogilvy to

keep tab on the job, check the bills and pay them as they fall due; and above all things, insist that Gregory shall place the money in a San Francisco bank, subject to the joint check of his representative and ours. Hire a good lawyer to draw up the agreement between you; be sure you're right, and then go ahead—full speed. When you return to Sequoia, I'll have a few more points to give you. I'll mull them over in the meantime."

CHAPTER XXII

WHEN Bryce Cardigan walked down the gangplank at the steamship-dock in San Francisco, the first face he saw among the waiting crowd was Buck Ogilvy's. Mr. Ogilvy wore his overcoat and a joyous smile, proving that in so far as he was concerned, all was well with the world; he pressed forward and thrust forth a great speckled paw for Bryce to shake. Bryce ignored it.

"Why, don't you remember me?" Ogilvy demanded. "I'm Buck Ogilvy."

Bryce looked him fairly in the eye and favored him with a lightning wink. "I have never heard of you, Mr. Ogilvy. You are mistaking me for some one else."

"Sorry," Ogilvy murmured. "My mistake! Thought you were Bill Kerrick, who used to be a partner of mine. I'm expecting him on this boat, and he's the speaking image of you."

Bryce nodded and passed on, hailed a taxicab and was driven to the San Francisco office of his company. Five minutes later, the door opened and Buck Ogilvy entered.

"I was a bit puzzled at the dock, Bryce," he explained as they shook hands, "but decided to play safe and then follow you to your office. What's up? Have you killed somebody, and are the detectives on your trail? If so, 'fess up and I'll assume the responsibility for your crime, just to show you how grateful I am for that hundred."

"No, I wasn't being shadowed, Buck, but my principal enemy was coming down the gangplank right behind me, and—"

"So was my principal enemy," Ogilvy interrupted. "What does our enemy look like?"

"Like ready money. And if he had seen me shaking hands with you, he'd have suspected a connection between us later on. Buck, you have a good job—about five hundred a month."

"Thanks, old man. I'd work for you for nothing. What are we going to do?"

"Build twelve miles of logging-railroad and parallel the line of the old wolf I spoke of a moment ago."

"Good news! We'll do it. How soon do you want it done?"

"As soon as possible. You're the vice-president and general manager."

"I accept the nomination. What do I do first?"

"Listen carefully to my story, analyze my plan for possible weak spots and then get busy, because after I have provided the funds and given the word 'Go!' the rest is up to you. I must not be known in the transaction at all, because that would be fatal. And I miss my guess if, once we start building or advertising the building of the road, you and I and everybody connected with the enterprise will not be shadowed day and night by an army of Pinkertons."

"I listen," said Buck Ogilvy, and he inclined a large speckled red ear in Bryce's direction, the while his large speckled hand drew a scratch-pad toward him.

Three hours later Ogilvy was in possession of the most minute details of the situation in Sequoia, had tabulated, indexed and cross-indexed them in his ingenious brain and was ready for business—and so announced himself. "And inasmuch as that hundred you sent me has been pretty well shattered," he (Continued on page 108)

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"Kiss me, then," she demanded, "—the first kiss of our love!" At this moment a faint scream echoed from the doorway. Freda stood there.

The SIDE-SHOW GIRL

By PETER CLARK MACFARLANE

Illustrated by

ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

THE professional strong-
man had legs like con-
crete towers, and his
shoulders suggested the abut-
ments of a bridge; but with them he had mild gray eyes
and absurd Cupid's-bow lips which made his mouth almost
as sweet as a woman's. This, together with a certain inno-
cence of expression which betokened a naïve and guileless
soul, was why they called him Baby-faced Joe. Just now
Joe was engaged in the writing of a letter. His tongue
was nearly bitten in two, and his mighty muscles ached
from the strain of functioning all their strength through
the mere holding of a pen. When at length the stupendous
task was finished, every ounce of him was weak as—un-
willing to trust the precious missive to the mails, and dis-
trusting of a mother's prying eye—he placed it secretly in
the tiny boxlike dressing-room through which Freda must
pass to reach the bally-box.

This act of Joe's was consum-
mated at the ghostly hour of
eleven A. M., when the building
was deserted by all its human
inhabitants save only the Wild Man of Java, who kept a
sleepy watch which did not extend to marking curiously
the concerns of Joseph Holmquist.

There was an eye, however, which did note the strong-
man's actions and brand them as suspicious. This was the
innocent, amber optic of Scipio, the five-year-old orang-
outang. Affectionate, curious, sedate,—not yet come to
those years of viciousness which invariably overtake his
kind in captivity,—the baby ape-man sprawled upside
down before the monkey-cage on a cast-off automobile
cushion, head hanging off, meditatively picking his teeth
with a straw. But his whimsically inverted eyes were ro-
ving according to their habit, and missing not one detail of
all that went on about him. Suddenly the dental opera-

tion was interrupted. One ungainly leg, extended lazily in the air as if in the act of grasping a limb in its native jungle, remained forgotten, but all the rest of him was absorbed in the perception of something entirely new to his child-mind.

Never had he seen Joe Holmquist with a letter before. Swannick, the manager of the show, often had letters that he carried in his hand and dropped in the funny little iron box at the corner, and others that he got from the man with the gray clothes and a leather bag, letters which he either tore up and threw away or put carefully into his pocket; but Joe Holmquist carrying a letter importantly as if it were one of his bar-bells, putting it into his pocket, then taking it out again and smelling of it,—Scipio's interpretation of kissing,—all this was new and unusual and required explanation. Therefore, sixty seconds after Joe went out to lunch, the young anthropoid had gone to the full length of his chain on one side, to possess himself of the wild-man's lance; and next, proceeding to the full length of the chain upon the other, he parted the curtains of the dressing-box, speared the envelope where it stood upon the make-up shelf and retired to the straw floor of his cage to consider its contents carefully and in private. Thus did Scipio tie an awkward knot in the web of the strong-man's life. But there were other webs and other knots.

An hour and a half passed. The daily exhibition of Gallagher's Congress of Freaks was getting under way. A mechanical organ wheezed laboriously, and the hoarse voice of the bally-hoo was heard in the land. As Joe posed, flexing his mighty muscles with an absently impressive air, his mild gaze wandered across the alligator-tank and the snake-charmer's den to the open street-front and Freda—Freda of the coquettish, drooping lash, the rouge-red, saucy lip, the bare and tapering arm and the short, spangled skirt. With gold-stockinged, shapely legs and ankles cunningly clocked and daintily crossed, and with bosom heaving gently from recent

exercise, the girl sat in a chair on a platform some four feet above the sidewalk along which streamed the first installments of a Saturday afternoon throng at Coney Island.

When the strong-man's glance had found her, a look of yearning appeared in his tender gray eyes, and his absurd Cupid's-bow lips parted in a rapt and wistful sigh, a sigh which was interrupted by a slight start when he saw that while the round-shouldered bally-man harangued the crowd, her act had gathered, the girl was calmly reading a letter—at first with approving interest in the dark eyes, but later with a scornful smile. Then the missive found mysterious lodgment somewhere out of sight, and Freda stared about

While the round-shouldered bally-man harangued the crowd, the girl was calmly reading a letter—at first with approving interest in the dark eyes, but later with a scornful smile.



ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

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er with an air of boredom. Interpreting this, the obtuse angle of inquiry and of apprehension in Joe's blond brows became the acute one of trouble and of grief.
To the crowd that stared and tried to ogle, the girl was just a tawdry artificial butterfly. To Joe she was something wonderful, immature and helpless. He knew that for her to sit in gaudy attire, perfectly unconscious before the milling herd, was as natural as for a kitten to gambol in the grass. From cradle-days she had tramped it over the face of the country, but with distaste for the life growing as her small body grew.

"Why don't you get in and work with me?" Frau Goebel used to complain; but Freda could not like the snakes. She stamped her small foot and shuddered; and soft-hearted Joe, always concerned when Frau Goebel scolded, in secret dried the fledgling's tears, awkwardly solicitous.

"I'm got my moder to support, but I'm savin'," he used to assure her. "I'll send you to business college; sure I will."

Frau Goebel meantime had registered the strong-man for matrimonial conscription. To be sure, he was only twenty-three, but she was young for her years, and Joe was old for his. Besides, what a team they would make!

Joe with his muscles and she with her snakes! They would be half a side-show themselves. Nor did such connubial intent prove the widow mercenary. She had a loving heart. She loved her snakes, and she loved her daughter. The same fingers that twined the anaconda about her neck sewed and stitched that Freda might wear good clothes, and scrimped and saved that she might not come to want if the movies killed the snake-charmer's profession entirely. Was it unnatural, then, that her heart's cooling embers should be warmed and fanned into a last hot blaze by the propinquity of Joe in trunks and leopard-skin, the satiny sheen of his arms and shoulders gleaming continually before her susceptible eyes? Perhaps not; but to the strong-man, divining something of the Frau's intent, it was uncomfortable.

And while he eyed Frau Goebel warily, mysterious nature vexed him with a startling change in Freda. All in a few weeks, it seemed, Freda the child—spare, gangling and precocious—became Freda the woman, with beauty, symmetry and self-consciousness. She romped with the big bear-man no more; she shed no more rebellious tears, but was content to bask and bide, apparently serene in her awareness of an entirely new set of weapons.

Joe, too, was changed. Something in his huge and arching chest fell down like tumblers in a safe whenever she came near; and he couldn't talk to her in the old familiar way—nor in the new way that his heart prompted.

But reverting again to webs and knots—and Scipio! Entirely baffled in his endeavors to make head or tail of the strong-man's hymn of passion, the man—buried it with other matters of mon-

When the strong-man's glance had found her, a look of yearning appeared in his tender gray eyes, and his absurd Cupid's-bow lips parted in a rapt and wistful sigh.

key-interest under a pile of straw in the corner of his cage, swung out of his door and mounted to the stage on which he gave his hourly act. Before him, on the table where he would presently give an imitation of a munitions-millionaire at breakfast at his club, lay a policeman's coat and helmet and a regulation night-stick,—the wearing of the two and the swinging of the third being also part of Scipio's bit in making the world forget its troubles.

But as the anthropoid, with true thespian vanity, awaited the time for his act to begin, he suddenly stiffened in every part of him, and the red hair on his backbone ran up in a row of bristles that extended almost to his nose. Some seven feet away upon the floor, which lay less than a yard beneath the mimic stage, was a bulldog, ugly, heavy and crouching low. His tail was bobbed; one ear was cropped and the other chewed off; and the underjaw outreached the upper one and sprouted two long and spike-like teeth. The beast's general decorative scheme was irregular spots of black upon a ground immaculately white. One of these black blotches encroached upon the mangled ear, and another hung like a patch beneath an eye, imparting a yet more sinister aspect to a countenance already unpleasant enough. The brute's whole manner was one of

instant aggression. It said, like Grant at Donelson: "I propose to move immediately upon your works." And Scipio's trainer and protector Emil was nowhere in sight!

Everybody about the place seemed to grasp the situation at the same time. Frau Goebel shouted warning; the bearded lady shrieked, and the fat-woman hiccupped and relapsed into mild hysteria, while strong-man Joseph Holmquist, abandoning his pose and his platform, came plunging to the rescue.

But the bulldog, as if fearful of losing his legitimate prey, had already launched himself with a low, hissing growl, white teeth flashing cruelly.

Inspiration, however, came to Scipio, who had small stomach to become a prey. By a lightning movement he seized the policeman's club and whirling it with all the strength of fear and his own stout arm, brought it down with a satisfying thud on the head of the attacking foe as the dog



came hurtling through the air. The bulldog, struck by lightning in his withered right ear, fell curling and snarling into a helpless heap on the floor; and for a few seconds, lying straight and still, with stubby tail quivering, he must have seen the lights of some other dog-world. Presently, however, one white hind-leg kicked spasmodically and then the other; then the canine's body squirmed and rolled over. There appeared to follow a moment of mental stock-taking;

then his dogship got up weakly and balanced himself uncertainly and with a puzzled air, as if trying to remember.



At this juncture a young man in cream trousers, a green coat, a mauve belt, a sport-shirt, a flowing tie of rainbow hue and a Panama hat jauntily misshapen came breezing into the purview.

"Hello, Cecil!" he exclaimed, addressing the dog with irrepressible spirits. "What do you think of the monkey?" At the same time he pointed to Scipio, now sitting warily in the door of his cage and marking the behavior of his latest adversary with an expression which certainly resembled amused satisfaction.

So far as Cecil was concerned, this was just now a tactical question; nevertheless he looked up to the young man as to one he recognized as master, and wagged his tail dutifully if feebly, although by his manner asking to be excused from expressing an opinion upon any subject until he got something straightened out in his mind. Meantime Manager Swannick, Scipio's trainer, Joe and others crowded round.

"Hello, Chauncey! That your dog? Better keep him away from here! The ape will kill him."

"Kill him?" blustered Chauncey.

Then they told him what had happened, and this Chauncey proved himself a regular fellow by laughing heartily.

"Some surprise-party, Cecil, old boy," he sympathized, stooping to give the first aid of a caress to the still groggy dog, who was now eying the ape with a strangely reminiscent look as if he had met him somewhere before.

Chauncey then, bidding the dog lie down in a corner of the fat-man's booth, passed on to the back of the baby-box where Freda was sitting, and lifted up a hand to pat her familiarly on the arm. She permitted this; and Joe, witnessing it, allowed his brow to contract into what was as near a scowl as his bland features ever mustered.

Yet to a disinterested eye the young man seemed to possess ways that were kindly and assurance that was entirely pleasing. In just such fashion three weeks before he had first blown in upon the house of freaks, without his bulldog but attired, as now, like the favorite son of Jacob. Nor did the tropic coloring of his garments exceed the engaging

There appeared in the doorway a slender figure wrapped in one of Miss Henrietta's own bathrobes. "You're—you're Miss Ewing?" suggested a scared voice. "I thought I was!" exclaimed Miss Ewing, with sarcasm. "What brought you here—disgraceful creature?"

warmth of his personality, for within fifteen minutes he had been on terms of intimacy with half the people in the place and called the crabby skeleton-man and the haughty fat-lady by their first names. Ten minutes more, and business being quiet, he had coaxed Manager Swannick out for a little spin to the beach and back in a huge gray car.

Chauncey's face, considered simply as a face, did not seem very high. It was unpleasantly triangular in shape, although containing the usual list of features. Among these were some pale blue eyes, beaming with an evident desire to do the world good, and a mouth that was possibly weak but given to a wide, engaging smile in which some upper teeth were prominently represented. Yet what does plainness mar, when richly clad and carried to and fro in a huge automobile of expensive manufacture? Especially what brooks it, when joined to a generous and a modest nature?

That Chauncey, despite his general loudness, did have an unobtrusive note in his character had been perceived when he had got away without so much as leaving his card. The second day his visit had been repeated and his acquaintance extended, though this time it was Freda and her mother who had got the little dash to the beach and back in the dull middle of the afternoon. And still Chauncey had been anonymous!

For this reason, perhaps, Frau Goebel had eyed him with even more suspicion than usually attached to those who hovered round her daughter. Feeling the impulse to investigate, she had taken the number of the big gray car and learned per telephone that it belonged to the Ewings of Ewing Place, Brooklyn. With this much of a start, industrious consultings of a directory, some social registers and a friendly captain of police in the borough of Brooklyn had revealed that the Ewings of Ewing Place consisted of but two, an elderly spinster lady, Miss Henrietta Ewing, rich, proud and philanthropic, and her nephew Chauncey Ewing, an erratic young man but believed to be good in the heart and known to be heir to three fortunes—his father's, his mother's and, prospectively, his aunt's.

With this breath-taking knowledge secure in her possession, Frau Goebel's mind had assumed a speculative hue, and her attitude toward the sportive idler's visits had changed considerably. Knowing that it is the human instinct to crab another's game, she had imparted the secret of the name to all, but the young man's position and prospects in life to none save Freda.

"You should be nice to him, Freda," Frau Goebel had instructed. "Maybe his folks are away for the summer and he's lonesome."

"You should need to tell me to be nice to him," Freda had rejoined pertly. "He likes me."

For three straight weeks Chauncey had been as regular as afternoon, delighting Freda with his driving, tickling her with his unblushing flatteries and bewildering her with the number and variety of his clothes. His neckties were poems, while his shirts in stripe and check

exhibited colors for which some one must have paged the solar spectrum.

Naturally this drive for the heart of Freda, going on beneath his nose, turned Joe greener than some of Chauncey's four-in-hands. Yet he couldn't blame the girl. Chauncey was a likable enough chap. Besides, it did seem that she tried to give Joe his chance, but he kept away from her. He would lower his eyes when they met. He spoke in monosyllables. He all but resisted her all but advances. Joe knew well enough that in this he was stupid and blameworthy, but—how does a great big sheep of a man help feelings that come up in his breast when, conscious of a rival's superlative advantages, he sees the object of his heart's desire slowly and surely turned away from him? The warning of his critical danger had come when Freda, after regarding him for a fortnight always with mild wonder in her eyes, had assumed an air of impatience. It was this situation which had led Joe to the writing of that letter with the delivery of which the well-intentioned Scipio had interfered so recklessly.

But now, we are again at the present. Scipio is still sitting warily in the door of his cage. Cecil, a sadder and a humbler dog, is curled up in the fat-man's booth. Chauncey is helping Freda down from the platform from which she is perfectly able to assist herself, and is asking Al if they can't have a little run. In fact, all is set for another tangle in the skeins of somebody's life.

"Sat'day afternoon!" objects Al. "What the perdition's the matter with you?" And then relenting, as so many relented before the blue eyes of Chauncey, he says: "Well, not more than twenty minutes, then," and turns to his ticket-selling, for the spieler is leading the crowd through the door and directing them first to the snake-charmer's booth.

Freda, with a swift exchange of glances, passes her mother, whose neck at the moment is encircled by a huge but harmless reptile, and goes to the partitioned rear, where the two have housekeeping rooms and where Joe also has a stall he calls a room. The girl reappears in a moment dressed for a ride by the simple donning of a mustard-colored cape covering her dancing costume to the heels, though the rouge is still upon her lips and the liquid blue upon her lashes. She tries a glance at Joe, but he, moodily waiting for the ballyhoo to escort the crowd in his direction, has no eye for her until that petite back is turned. Then he scans the figure longingly and gazes at the door until the voice of the Barker rouses him to his act. Whereupon he trundles out his ponderous bar-bell.

"Will some gentleman kindly step upon the platform and heft this for me?" he inquires in tired, professional tones. After the usual hesitancy, a man of long-shoreman type steps up, hooks his knotted fingers under the

Freda straightened and drew the bathrobe tighter about her. "Mightn't you be mistaken about calling me that name?" she inquired.



bar, strains until his neck-veins seem bursting and—stirs it from the floor.

"Heavy, isn't it?" inquired Joe.

"Betchalife!" sighs the longshoreman with a silly grin.

Joe smiles and swings the thing aloft as if it were a walking-stick. Heavy? To him all things are light save one. That one is his own heart, and when the group of gazers and gapers has passed on, he steps down from his platform and turns back to his stall to stretch on his back for a few minutes and ponder the poignancy in his breast. Frau Goebel has also gone back to take advantage of her breathing-spell. Joe knows this and is wary; but of what use for a giant to tiptoe when a woman listens?

"Ah, Joey," she cajoles, "come inside and have a glass of lager with me. It's just off the ice."

JOE started despairingly. He wished to be alone. The sound of any woman's voice, the sight of any woman's face save only one, was just now unendurable. He looked in upon her, a self-conscious flush upon his cheeks, a plea in his mild eyes; but looking, he was lost and stumbled weakly in.

Frau Goebel was in her working clothes, which meant that above a stiff and barrel-like corset, tattooed arms and thick shoulders were bare, while below a pink-silk shift that came to her knees and passed for a dress appeared stocky legs clad in peachblow hosiery and terminating in high-heeled slippers tied with bands of ribbon that interlaced over puffy ankles. Some yardage of blond hair was wrapped round her head; cheeks and lips were plentifully and cheaply rouged; and the large blue eyes had been wrought upon until they expressed the brightness of a youth that was rather more than preparing to depart.

"Ach, Joey! Poor feller. Come, let me wipe his brow."

Joe bent his perspiring, troubled brow; Frau Goebel wiped it and thrust him down into a seat the juxtaposition of which with her own was carefully calculated.

"Ach, but my boy is handsome," was her next advance as she tried the effect of a caressing hand on Joe's expanse of undraped shoulder. The strong man shrank from the touch. Honestly he tried not to, but—this was the hand that stroked the python; these were the lips that crooned over it, and now they were pursed for crooning over him!

"My boy looks tired to-day."

"Yes, Mother, I'm tired." Anything to be agreeable.

"Mother? Don't call me Mother. I told you that before already. Call me Hilda."

"Yes, Hilda," said Joe dutifully.

"What makes my boy tired? Them cannon-balls is too heavy. You should get bigger ones and hollow. Stuff 'em with feathers."

"Ah, I got something heavier yet than that," groaned Joe, melted by the tones of her honest sympathy. "It's here—in my heart. It's my love, Hilda, my love—"

"Ach! You confess it at last, *mein Liebling!*"

Frau Goebel dexterously and impulsively deposited herself in his arms. Joe wriggled and desired to escape.

"Mother!"

"I told you, don't call me Mother," chided the Frau with a flush of red that was not rouge. "Call me sweet-heart!"

"But Hilda, you got me wrong. I didn't say nothing about you."

"Ah, Joey!" Frau Goebel laid a fond, rebuking finger across his lips—the finger with which she handled the snakes. "Joey, you don't have to said it. Your looks, your sighs; oh, Joey, you are so bashful, but at last we got it out between us, didn't we?"

Sitting in his lap, she almost strangled Joseph with a hug; but he, a shorn Samson, let his arms sag.

"It's not you I love; it's Freda," he blurted.

"Freda!" Frau Goebel sprang up, whimpering: "The

child of my bosom—she rifles my heart of its dearest. Deceiver! You grind my heart to powder. You sit me already and sigh and moon. You pretend—and you tell me it is Freda. No! You are mistaken. You foolish boy! How should you know your own heart. It is me you love—me!" And Frau Goebel, having convinced herself of this fact, seated herself once more.

"Do you not love me? Is it not true?" The Frau, reproachful tears, seized the strong man's shoulders.

"Why, of course I love you," insisted Joe wretchedly and he was going to add, "but not in the way you mean. As Freda's mother I am bound to love you."

The crafty widow, however, waited for no undesirable qualifying phrases.

"Kiss me, then," she demanded, "—the first kiss of love!"

Joe's lips writhed, but the lady's shaped themselves and took off the first must of the grape from the lips of the professional strong-man. At this moment a faint scream echoed from the doorway. Freda, back from her ride stood there.

"Joe!" she murmured, white to the lips. "Joe!"

"Don't be upset, dearie," said her mother in sugary tones. "Joe has just told me that he loves me."

Freda became suddenly cold and hard.

"You better get out to your act, or Swannick will dock you again," she remarked acridly. "You too, Joe!"

Frau Goebel rushed out, but Joe turned at the door and extended a pleading hand.

"She done it, Freda—all herself—honest to God! My heart is sick for love of you—like I told you in the letter."

"Letter!" Freda scoffed, having seen no letter. Yet she did not doubt that, so far as his love was concerned, Joe spoke the truth; and to a loyal soul this made his conduct with her mother seem the more outrageous. With a heart too full for upbraidings, she sent him from the room by a gesture and dropped upon her face on the bed fluffy ruffles crumpling recklessly and gold-stockinged legs and patent-leather heels kicking angrily.

BUT tropic storms in the breast of youth must soon be over. Sitting up and drying some tears, Freda plunged a hand into her bosom and drew out a rumpled letter—the letter she had been reading on the bally-box an hour ago. It was from Chauncey and outlined a certain project. She had scorned the idea then, and she scorned it now, but in the light of what had just occurred, it contained the germ of a possibility. Almost as if in obedience to her wish, the writer of the letter, who had been anxiously waiting her reappearance, at this instant came boldly out and knocked upon her door. Entering in response to an invitation in one syllable, he was surprised at confronting a woe-begone and tearful countenance.

"Something has happened," Freda explained solemnly.

"Well, I should say!" breathed Chauncey, blue eyes wide and sympathetic.

"I've had a fight with Mother, and I'm going away."

"Where?" There was a glint in the blue eyes.

"I don't know."

"When?" The glint had become a gleam.

"This minute."

"Now, I can take you to my aunt," proposed Chauncey eagerly.

"Could you?" asked Freda, pretending to doubt.

"Easy as running over a chicken. Come, fly with me. One of the fine things about Chauncey was his extreme readiness.

"But—but wouldn't you have to talk to your aunt first?"

Chauncey did seem to pause and consider for a moment, but decided with a gulp:

"Not necessary! Your looks'll do the talking."

"I'd have to take some things—to take my clothes," reflected Freda, looking about her (Continued on page 45)

The inside story of a great department-store—and of a remarkably dramatic love-affair. We think this the biggest and best story Royal Brown has ever written.

The SONS of CALVIN FAIRFIELD

By ROYAL BROWN

Illustrated by J. J. GOULD



Pen was a Hollowell. She had spent four years mastering Latin, Greek, Divinity Fudge and other accomplishments. That she should descend to Fairfield's bargain basement savored of atavism.

WHEN it was reported that Pen Hollowell was actually working in Fairfield's bargain basement, everyone who knew her nearly furnished a pleasant surprise for Linford's enterprising undertaker. In the first place Pen was a Hollowell. In the second place she had spent four years mastering Latin, Greek, Divinity Fudge and other highly ornamental accomplishments. That she should descend to the social depths plumbied by Fairfield's bargain basement savored of some queer atavism. One wondered, with her younger brother, where Pen got that stuff.

Nevertheless it was, as her mother admitted to friends intimate enough to commiserate, "just like Pen." She said it in a tone that suggested that Pen's being like Pen was a cross that had been visited upon her—why, she knew not. And she added, plaintively, that of course there was no stopping Pen when she once got an idea in her head.

This was quite true. Though Pen could and not infrequently did look fluffy and feminine and even appealing, there was a precision and a purposefulness to her that did not appear on an unusually attractive surface. No one would have to strain a tenth of a point to call her pretty. A kindly Providence had presented Pen with all the material for a ready-cut career, but Pen—being just like Pen—had determined to build a career of her own.

In the end Pen had yielded but one point. She summured with the family at Singing Beach. Then, late in September, just as Mrs. Hollowell was beginning to believe she had forgotten all about "it," Pen announced she had obtained a position.

"The bargain basement!" exclaimed her mother. Mrs. Hollowell's voice was anguished.

"Now, Mother, do be an old duck and take it like a major," admonished Pen, a mixture of metaphor and cajolery which left Mrs. Hollowell speechless.

Pen plunged into the bargain basement (two levels below the traffic-tortured street) as confidently and as cleanly as she had, a week before, plunged into the sea off Singing Beach. She wore a business costume that was as sensible as her swimming-suit had been. Pen prided herself on being sensible. Her business costume consisted of a white waist, a serge skirt and trim black boots.

"I want them," she told her mother with unconscious egotism, "to think I'm one of them."

Evidently they did. Anyway, the girl at the table next to Pen's—Pen's was "Blouses, \$1.69"—had no doubts. Her name was Myrtle Fish.

"You've got a lovely tan, aint you?" she said, absently scratching a dark and glossy coiffure with her pencil. "I guessed right off that you'd been waiting on table at the seashore this summer. —No, madam, forty-four is the largest size we've got. Yes, madam, I'm sure."

Myrtle regarded the broad back of her inquisitor as the latter waddled away.

"Reminds me of that old saw about how many yards of fly-paper it would take to make a shirt-waist for an elephant," she observed. Then her eyes reverted to Pen.

"Sometimes when summer comes I think I'll leave the bargain basement flat and get a job at a hotel myself. But somehow I aint got the nerve. I've always been pretty classy, and I'd sort of hate to have my friends know I was waiting on table."

(This Pen saved and sprang on the family at dinner that night. Her father laughed, but her mother sighed.)

FAIRFIELD'S was the creation of Calvin Fairfield. He was a large man with a ruddy face, of which the outstanding features were a wide, humorous mouth, bushy gray side-whiskers and a reddish, shining baldness of dome. Associated with him in the management of the business were his two sons Edward and Hugh. They were half-brothers.

"Fairfield's is kind of old-fashioned," elaborated Myrtle. "Edward—that's the oldest son, the dark one, y'know—is always at his old man to make it more progressive, like Merton's. . . ."

"Hugh is dandy-looking, aint he? I prefer light-complected men myself. They look so clean and kind of



Pen tried to decide which would be better—calmly to take possession of the revolver and defy him, or to leave him.

honest. But Edward is the smartest. Everybody says that when the old man dies, Edward will take right hold and change this place all over.

"The old man—Calvin Fairfield, y'know—is pretty set, and I guess it's no use trying to run him. But you gotta hand it to him, at that. They say he only had a trunkful of stuff when he started business!"

Myrtle's comments were casual, delivered in the occasional lulls in custom. There were periods, sometimes of hours, when Pen and Myrtle were beset like lone guardians of an attacked outpost. If Myrtle found time and breath to cast an aside, it was only:

"Gee whiz! Can you beat it?"

Pen would have said: "Isn't it great!" She breasted the surge of shoppers with the same exhilaration that she breasted the surf at Singing Beach. To add a final touch of piquancy, there was the sense of being incognito. No one in Fairfield's, she felt sure, suspected she was other than an ordinary shopgirl.

In this Pen was wrong. Edward and Hugh Fairfield were both exquisitely conscious of the fact that there was a new girl in the basement and that she was—different.

Edward was—to use an expression he rather fancied—instantly intrigued. With characteristic efficiency he procured her card from the employment-department and learned that she whom business had numbered Nine-seventy-three had been christened Penelope Hollowell.

The surname, at least, was familiar to him. It might be only a coincidence, but he decided it might be well to make

sure. So he went slowly, but not so slowly but that he learned, very speedily, that Pen was one of the Hollowells. After that he disavowed the word *intrigued*. And very wisely he concluded that a Hollowell would not be dazzled by having a Fairfield invite her to dinner.

As for Hugh, it was some time before he knew Number Nine-seventy-three's name. He only knew that she was unlike the others. He never spoke to her; he never even seemed to see her. He felt, somehow, it would be indecate to stare at her, and he couldn't look at her without feeling that he must be staring.

Edward experienced no such compunction. He paused one day, in front of Pen's table (it was "Shoes, all sizes and widths, \$2.98," that day).

"I happened to hear how you handled that customer," he said, "and I think it merits a personal word of praise."

Pen flushed with delight. Even Myrtle's cynicism did not dull her pleasure.

"Why didn't you ask him for a raise?" she demanded. "I would have."

Pen said something about praise meaning as much as money sometimes.

"That's the stuff the boss always tries to put across," retorted Myrtle with proper scorn. But a moment later she added shrewdly and not unkindly: "Take my advice, kid, and watch your step."

This Pen repeated to her mother, who sighed.

"If you would only let me pick you up in the car after work," said Mrs. Hollowell, irrelevantly. "I can't bear

think of your riding in the crowded elevated every night."

"It's much more interesting," declared Pen, who had been over this point twice before. And she added maliciously, in her lilting voice: "A man spoke to me to-night!"

"Pen!"

"He did. He said: 'Wont you please take my seat?'"

Pen had already decided on her next step, and she would have taken it, just as surely and as confidently, if Edward had not spoken. And anyway she went not to him, but to his father.

Pen, being a Hollowell and Pen besides, never questioned the wisdom of going over the heads of department-managers and superintendents to Calvin Fairfield himself. As a matter of fact, the latter prided himself on being accessible to anybody in his employ at any time. He said so himself, but none of his employees believed him. Pen was literally the first to take him at his word and demand admittance to his office.

This was on the second floor. Pen found her way blocked by an old-fashioned guard-rail of black walnut. The attendant happened to be away, and Pen opened a gate and passed through, with undiminished assurance, and knocked at the door marked *Private*. A voice invited her in.

Pen entered. It was not the office of Calvin Fairfield, but that of his sons. They both regarded her with surprise.

"Mr. Fairfield—Mr. Calvin Fairfield," said Pen, half questioningly, half explanatorily. Naturally she turned to Edward. He rose and opened the door to an inner office.

Calvin Fairfield was at his desk. He waved Pen to a chair, and after a moment indicated he was ready to listen. While she talked, he watched her quizzically.

"You mean," he said after she had finished, "that when Uncle Josh comes in from the country and wants to buy something pretty for Aunt Hetty, you'd take him in hand and sort of advise him?"

Pen nodded.

"Or," she enlarged, "it might be a father with a motherless daughter who needed a school-outfit, or a bride picking out a trousseau—"

"I've heard about such a job before," he broke in. "How much more could you make them buy that way?"

"It is more of a service-idea than a salesmanship-scheme," said Pen.

"And of course—"

"Service!" exploded Calvin Fairfield. "Service is all right, but don't you forget, young woman, that the main plan of a store like this is to sell goods—and to sell them so they'll stay sold!"

"I realize that—" began Pen.

"Then you realize more than a lot of people in the department-store business do to-day," he said, with a touch of grimness. He paused; then: "Ever hear how I made my money?"

Pen shook her head.

"I made it by letting people think they were fooling me. Let them take stuff out and bring it back. They thought they were getting the best of me. But I fooled them; they paid for it!"

"When a customer says 'Send it,' the average cost is eleven cents. If she changes her mind the next day and wants the team to call and bring it back, that costs eleven cents more. *That's* service. But you don't think I pay the twenty-two cents every time a woman changes her mind, do you?"

"N-no."

"Not on your bottom dollar," agreed Calvin Fairfield. "Service is all right as long as you can make somebody else pay for it."

From several small articles of merchandise which happened to be on his desk, he selected a watch with a luminous dial and a wrist-strap. He turned it over and examined the price-tag.

"Now, take this contraption here," he said. "If the people who will see it and buy it could be counted on to pay for it, take it with them and keep it, I could sell it for three dollars and a half. But I've got to remember that these customers of mine expect service. They'll want



Hugh appeared at her office, explaining that he had come to say good-by. "I've bought an old tramp steamer and fixed it up as a sort of private yacht," he said.

it charged and sent. And then they'll remember that somebody once said that a wrist-watch isn't worn by real, two-fisted men, and so some of them will send it back and we'll have to reverse the process.

"That's service. It has cost between thirty and fifty cents,—to charge an article costs ten cents, on an average,—and the watch must still be sold. That's what we've got to figure on. So to be on the safe side, the watch is priced at four dollars.

"The same thing is true of every article we sell. Service must be reckoned in the price just the same as light and heat—and it costs a darn sight more. So, excepting some things like furs and jewelry, which run higher, we start by figuring a gross profit of fifty per cent.

"That has to take care of everything—mark-downs, overhead and service. And by that time the net profit is so small that the only thing that saves us is sheer volume of business.

"I don't care how many customers fool themselves by thinking they are getting something for nothing. But I don't want any of my employees to get the idea that Fairfield's can afford to give something for nothing—even their time. Fairfield's pay-roll runs to over a million a year—"

"Over a million a year!" gasped Pen.

Calvin Fairfield eyed her shrewdly.

"You remind me," he commented dryly, "of a woman who came to see me awhile back. 'Can you imagine,' she asked, 'what a difference of just five dollars a week in their pay-envelopes would mean to your employees?'"

"And I said to her: 'If you mean five dollars a week more, madam, I can imagine what a difference it would mean to Fairfield's. Over four hundred thousand dollars a year.' And she nearly dropped dead."

His eyes softened, and his mouth twisted humorously. Nevertheless he studied her for a minute. He was a great merchant, but he had been a small one. He still had the knack of instant appraisal of those he came into contact with.

"What is your number?" he asked.

"Nine hundred and seventy-three."

He noted it down.

"You're the first girl with enough gumption to suggest anything to me," he said. "We'll try your scheme out. Only, don't forget that all the time you're spending with Uncle Josh, Fairfield's pays for. Arrange the details with my son Edward."

WHEN Pen had left his office, Calvin Fairfield reached for his phone and called up the superintendent of his employment-department.

"Charlie," he said,—that being his way with the older employees,—"what's Number Nine-seventy-three's name? I'll hold the line."

A minute later: "Yes—P—what's that? Spell it, man. P-e-n—I get it, Penelope Hallowell. What's that? Edward has looked her up? All right. Thanks!"

He put the receiver back on the hook.

"Hallowell," he grunted. "Humph!"

Pen had stopped, as directed, to see Edward Fairfield.

"Bully for you, Miss Hallowell," he said when she finished, and it did not strike Pen as odd that he knew her name. "I'll give you all the assistance I can, and I'll see that the plan is prominently mentioned in our newspaper advertising."

The words warmed Pen. This was what she had expected Calvin Fairfield would say.

"One thing more," Edward continued. "From now on, you'll have the run of the store. You'll get a new viewpoint toward the various departments. Suggestions will occur to you. I want you to come to me with these. I have a feeling you will become invaluable to Fairfield's."

(It was a Saturday afternoon, and Pen's mother was

at the symphony concert. But the music fell no more sweetly on Mrs. Hallowell's ears than all this on Pen's.)

Edward Fairfield started to speak again and paused. The door into the inner office had opened, and his father stood for a moment regarding them. But he passed through without speaking.

When the outer door had closed behind his father, Edward said:

"Don't lose your patience, and keep your enthusiasm."

"I will," promised Pen.

As Calvin Fairfield made his way to the elevators, he soliloquized:

"I guess she's one of the Hallowells, all right. I'll have to ask Eddie to tell me what he knows about her."

This he did.

"Oh—Miss Hallowell," said Edward. "Why, yes, I first noticed her when she was in the bargain-basement. She had a way with customers that—"

"She doesn't happen to be Cabot Hallowell's daughter, does she?" interrupted Calvin Fairfield.

Edward hesitated a moment.

"I—I believe she is."

Calvin Fairfield considered his son for a moment. Edward met his scrutiny defiantly.

"Humph!" said Calvin Fairfield finally.

PEN took up her new duties as if they were privileges—which to her they were. Mrs. Hallowell tried to share her joy but was hampered by a doubt as to whether Pen's new position was preferable to the bargain-basement or not. One could never be sure about Pen.

"It must be difficult, sometimes, to tell just what they want," ventured Mrs. Hallowell.

"It is," agreed Pen. "But it is such fun to help. There was a poor young man in to-day. He wanted a pair of corsets—"

"Corsets!"

"For his wife," continued Penelope calmly. "She's been in the hospital and is just getting ready to come out. He'd forgotten the size and was in despair when they sent for me. You should have seen him—really, I felt happy myself when I sent him home happy."

"But how did you find out the size?"

"Oh, he looked at me out of the corner of his eye and mumbled something about her being just my size; so I gave him a perfect thirty-six."

"Pen!"

In January, just after the Christmas deluge of returns had ceased and plans for the semiannual clearance-sale were under way, Edward asked Pen to come to his office. He explained the summons by saying that he wanted her to give him an unbiased opinion of Fairfield's selling-force. He suggested that she study Merton's and compare the two.

"Fairfield's force lacks pep and—" he was saying when the door opened. He stopped, and they both glanced up.

Calvin Fairfield entered. Behind him was Hugh. The latter, after a nod to Pen, went to his desk; but Calvin Fairfield stood still for a brief instant that somehow seemed unduly long. Pen had an inexplicable sense of having been caught in some mischief. But Edward rallied promptly.

"On the other hand, to get a force that really measures up to the highest ideals, takes a great deal of time, a great deal of training and worlds of patience," he finished.

Calvin Fairfield moved across the outer office and entered his own. A moment later a buzzer beside Edward's desk sounded, and Edward, with a flush of annoyance, excused himself. He was in the inner office only a moment.

"My father wishes to speak to you when we are through," he said. And then after a brief hesitation he added: "We'll talk further some other time."

Pen passed into Calvin Fairfield's office. He had dropped into his seat, and his eyes were shut. As she entered, they flickered open. They seemed to burn with



Pen announced that she had obtained a position. "The bargain basement!" exclaimed her mother.

an unusual fire; yet in his face there was an expression of weariness. He motioned her to a seat, but for a moment he did not speak. When he did, his words took her by surprise:

"Ever read those little jiggers they call Bio-Briefs in *The Journal*?"

Pen shook her head.

"You ought to. They're darn interesting. They tell about people you're always hearing about but never seem to know much about. This morning there was one about Richard III. Heard about him, haven't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"What interested me most—more than the princess in the tower—was what Richard said at Bosworth. Know what that was?"

"My kingdom for a horse?" ventured Pen.

"No. Shakespeare said that. What Richard said was, 'I shall die King of England.' And he did. I guess he was a villain, but he must have been something of a man too. He was only thirty-three."

His eyelids dropped briefly over his eyes, leaving his face extraordinarily like a mask. Then his eyes opened.

"If I couldn't be head of something, I'd rather die too. Folks say I ought to retire and take it easy and let Eddie and Hugh run the business. Doctor told me a year ago that if I didn't, I'd die some day with my boots on. Well, that seems to me the way a man would rather die."

His voice took on a sudden resonance as he bent toward Pen.

"They tell me that I built up Fairfield's, but it needs young blood. They're pretty polite about it, but what

they mean is that I'm an old fogey, I guess—not progressive enough."

He paused, to fumble at his collar.

"Folks tell you I started with a trunkful of stuff. They don't know I started with a general store, up in Aroostock County. It belonged to my father. When I got the business, I put in new ideas. I was so darned anxious to build up the business that first thing I knew I was giving something for nothing. Special inducements, I called them. The business went to smash, but I learned a pile. A merchant has got to sell, sell—everything."

Pen noticed that his hands gripped the arms of his chair so firmly that each knuckle was ringed with white. She wondered if he were all right. Why should he tell her these things?

"I'm telling you all this," he said, as if he had guessed her thought, "because I've an idea you're the girl that Hugh and Edward are both hankering for. One of these days—"

Pen felt this was too much. She arose.

"Please sit down," he said a little wearily. "I'm an old man—old as your father. That ought to excuse something, and anyway I guess I'm so near my—my Bosworth that you'll forgive what I say. Please!"

Pen sat down.

"I'll die head of Fairfield's," he continued. "After that, Hugh and Eddie can run the business. My lawyer suggested that I tie up things the way Marshall Field did. Field put his estate in trust for forty years. Then, if his grandsons are alive, they'll get control of it. But they'll be gray-haired men."

"Field's way may be wisest; (Continued on page 148)

A Complete Résumé of the Earlier Chapters of Rupert Hughes' Remarkable and Brilliant New Novel, "The Unpardonable Sin"

RUPERT HUGHES has based this novel on one of the most dramatic phases of the war—the brutality of the German soldiers toward defenseless women in the war zone and especially in Belgium. He tells particularly of two American women caught by the invaders in a Belgian convent and of the attempt of a third to save them.

Dimny Parcot is the lovely daughter of Stephen Parcot, a famous explorer. She was studying in Los Angeles when the war broke out, while her mother and sister were in doomed Belgium. It was weeks before Dimny heard of them after the invasion. Then a letter came from them. It had no salutation, no date, and no signature. It read, in part:

Oh, my dear little sister, the only bright thing in the world is that you will escape what Mamma and I have had to go through with.

One regiment—I won't tell you its name—settled down near the convent. There was terrible carousing.

I was so scared. Mamma tried to hide me somewhere. But they found us in a little cell. They fought each other, and then one of them laughed: "The mother is not so bad." They drew lots. I can't write. I hope you don't understand. I wanted to kill myself, but my religion made me afraid to murder myself and die as I am.

That wicked regiment marched away, and another halted. These officers were different. They beat the men who insulted us. But others came—more brutal even than the First Thuringians.

What the future will bring I don't know. Mamma and I are to be mothers, and we don't know who the—so many—I can't write—I can't die. Don't tell Daddy when he comes back, if he ever does. Tell him we were killed in the burning of this town, and you had a letter saying we were dead, and lost it.

Good-by, blessed little sister. We shall never see you again. Think of us as if we were what we wish we were, dead.

Dimny drew five thousand dollars from the bank and started East in a frenzy to get to her loved ones. In a Midwestern town her shocked nerves gave way and she suffered a complete collapse. She was tenderly cared for in the home of a Mrs. Winsor, a woman of German birth.

Dimny's illness was an anxious puzzle to the town physician. For days she lay as if dead. There seemed no way to awaken her till finally Noll Winsor, Mrs. Winsor's only son, in searching for some clue to get to the sleeping girl's consciousness (the Winsors knew nothing at all about her when they took her in) found the fateful letter in Dimny's money-belt. He was horror-stricken. He studied books on psycho-analysis, and with one definite thing to work on, the name of a regiment, the First Thuringians, he began to call the girl, whom he was learning to love, back to life.

It took Dimny weeks to convalesce. But as soon as her strength returned, she started again on her terrible and supposedly secret mission—for Noll had not told her of his finding the letter. But she was not to have to search alone, for Noll followed, became a courier of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, the only sure way to gain entrance into Prussian-held Belgium, and took Dimny with him in his motorcar.

Before Dimny had encountered Noll, she had had great



difficulty in trying to cross the border. In one attempt she had been seen by a Prussian spy, Oberstleutnant Klemm. Klemm had seen and attempted to make love to her sister Alice, in Louvain, where the unhappy girl and her mother had taken refuge after the pillaging of the convent. There they had hoped to bury themselves from sight while they awaited their fates. They had changed their names to Tudesq to escape detection, but instead of peace from persecution, they had had to undergo the horrors of the looting of that city.

Klemm mistook Dimny for Alice. Sure that the victim was again almost within his reach, Klemm had poor Dimny watched and harassed as a spy. She was arrested again and again and suffered the indignity of being searched to the skin. Finally such a search was made by a man official. The horror of it brought back an attack of her deathlike sleep and scared the official into thinking she would die on his hands. Noll was released from the prison where he was confined, to aid the officials.

Noll was overjoyed to find himself successful in bringing Dimny back to life the second time. In the search, however, the letter sewn into her belt, which Dimny could not bring herself to part with when told the danger of taking any writing into Prussian territory, was taken, and a copy sent to Berlin. Dimny and Noll were allowed to proceed, although kept under careful surveillance.

At Brussels, Noll made inquiries and found that the road to the convent where Dimny's sister Alice had been at school lay farther on past Louvain. Dimny was feverish to get there to learn some trace of her lost ones. In going through Louvain, their car quickly passed the figure of a girl carrying a bowl of broth to a sick woman. The girl was Alice. But she did not look up, and they sped by unnoticed, intent on getting to Dofnay and news as soon as possible. When they reached the ruins there, an old nun who at first thought Dimny was Alice returned, could not tell them anything.

BACK at Brussels, Dimny was in her hotel room looking out of a window when suddenly she felt that some one had entered stealthily. She turned—and the leering face of Klemm was beside hers. Again, thinking Dimny was Alice, he tried to make her acknowledge she had known him before. "Gott—but yes, you do know me. And dat other lady—your Mutter—she is no longer mit you?"

At last Dimny understood. The nun had taken her for Alice, and so had this man.

"Where did you see us, my mother and me?" she cried eagerly.

"You tell me," he answered stubbornly. "And do you remember my arm around you—so?" And he drew her to him. Dimny wanted to shriek, to fight, to kill him. But he knew the secret she would give her life to know, where her mother and sister were, and she must learn it.

This month's installment of the story begins on the next page.

A Vivid and Impressive Novel of To-day by the Author of "What Will People Say?" "Empty Pockets," "The Thirteenth Commandment" and "We Can't Have Everything"



She reached the window, threw it open and poised on the snowy sill for a leap to death. He gasped and retreated . . . put up his hands in an attitude of surrender.

JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

The UNPARDONABLE SIN

By RUPERT HUGHES

Illustrated by JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

CHAPTER XLV

KLEMM the spy had come to Dimny's room, and there was no one she could call to for help. Had Noll Winsor been less zealous in her service, he might have saved her from her present peril of soul and body. When Dimny, waking from foreign dream-worlds, found herself in the Palace Hotel at Brussels, saw the note he had left under the door, she blessed him for his devotion, for he said that he had got up early and gone to the office of the Commission for Relief in Belgium to organize the search for her mother and sister. But now she wished that he had been lazier and risen less betimes; else she might have called to him for protection against the invader of her room.

Noll was hampered by his solemn engagements not to

resist the German regulations; he writhed in the necessity for keeping the peace with the peaceless tyrants, and he was but a shackled champion at best. Yet she felt that he could have guarded her somehow from the menace of this Lieutenant Colonel Klemm.

Klemm's arms were groping out to close round her now, and she could think of no escape. Even if she had possessed a weapon to kill him with, his destruction would have removed the one person in her ken who could tell her news of her mother and sister.

Yet even he did not know where they were at the moment; otherwise he would not have mistaken Dimny for Alice. Still, he had seen Alice and her mother together, and if Dimny could only learn where that was, she would have a starting place for her search. She might find them actually waiting where Klemm had seen them last.

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Dimny must work a double stratagem: she must evade her captor without letting him escape; she must wheedle a secret from him without his suspecting that it was a secret. If she had been a Judith or a Delilah, she could have won him to her power by yielding to him, but she was incapable of a sophisticated unclean duplicity even for such a purpose. She was not great enough, or too good, or not good enough; at least, too young of mind to reason it out. An irresistible instinct overwhelmed her with loathing. The man's arms were as intolerable as the folds of a cold snake.

The thought that her poor sister had been crushed in those same arms that were closing about her now made them still more revolting to her. Her gorge rose at the thought. She could not play the siren for a moment. When Klemm leaned from his chair to gather her in, she simply rose and retreated sidelong out of his reach. He sprang to his feet and pursued her. She darted behind a table. Failing to clutch her across it, he ran round it. She thwarted his path with a chair that checked him long enough for her to reach the window, throw it open and poise on the snowy sill for a leap to death.

He gasped with fright and retreated in proof of surrender. She made ready to jump, and he groaned aloud at the thought of such a waste of beauty, even more than at the frustration of his success as a spy-hunter. He put up his hands in an attitude of surrender and cried:

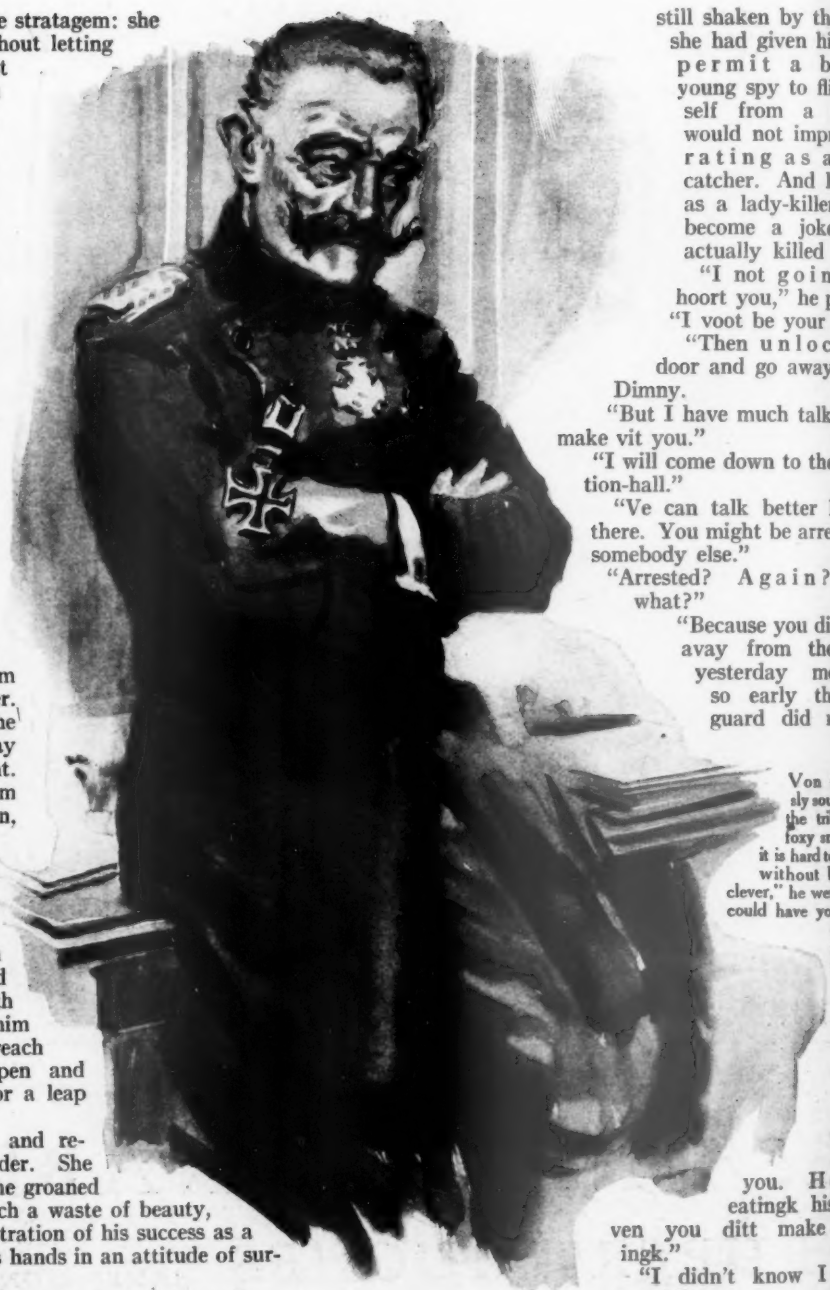
"Shtop! Shtop. Come away, *in Gottes Namen*."

"You promise not to touch me?"

"Yes, yes, I promise, on my honor as a Cherman soldier."

She laughed bitterly at that, but there was nothing better to expect, and she was chilled horribly by the gust of icy wind and the vision of that far-down pavement where a sheet of snow she had dislodged from the sill was silently broken to bits. She made to close the window. It was heavy and stubborn. He could not permit her delicate hands such a task. Chivalry has always been the most inconsistent of impulses, and it is perfectly natural for a man to save from a smirch or an effort the hands of a woman whose soul he would proudly befoul.

Dimny recoiled from the approach of Klemm, but when he had closed the window, he had cut her off from escape by the mystic door of suicide. The wooden door into the hall he had locked when he entered the room. He was



still shaken by the fright she had given him. To permit a beautiful young spy to fling herself from a window would not improve his rating as a spy-catcher. And his fame as a lady-killer would become a joke if he actually killed a lady.

"I not goink to hoort you," he pleaded.

"I voot be your frient."

"Then unlock the door and go away!" said

Dimny.

"But I have much talkingk to make vit you."

"I will come down to the reception-hall."

"Ve can talk better here as there. You might be arrested by somebody else."

"Arrested? Again? For what?"

"Because you ditt shlip away from the hotel yesterday morningk so early that our guard did not see

Von Bissing's sly soul paid her the tribute of a foxy smile. "But it is hard to be clever without being too clever," he went on. "I could have you arrested as a secret agent for England."

you. He was eatingk his coffee ven you ditt make escapink."

"I didn't know I had a guard."

"Everybody in die Belgien has a guart."

"Thanks! I'll remember that."

"Vere ditt you gone?"

"I'd rather not tell."

"Oh, I know."

"Then why ask?"

"To hear vat you should say. Ve get reports every place you stop. You ditt go by Dofnay, vere you tell me before you had been vit your so-called Mutter, your *Mummachen*, who live vit you in dat house in—"

She lifted her head so quickly and listened with such startled eagerness for the name of the town, that he did not finish his sentence. Could it be that she had really forgotten him and was trying to find out where their paths had crossed? He twisted his Kaiserian mustache. It had drooped a little. He had forgotten to wear his *Schneebartbinder* the last few nights.

the fright him. To beautiful fling her window improve his a spy- l his fame ller would ke if he d a lady. ingk to e pleaded. ar frient." ock the ay!" said

After the encounter in Esschen he had sped to Berlin and looked up his records. He found that the two American women in the Tudesq home had given their names as Judson, but that Madame Tudesq, questioned separately, had called them Parcot. The girl had called herself Alice Judson. Now she called herself Dimny Parcot. The copy of the letter Dimny carried had not yet reached Berlin, and he did not see it before he returned to Belgium. He therefore still believed Dimny to be Alice. He thought it odd that she should cling to a part of her name; and yet he knew it as a curious part of spy-psychology that the aliases selected are usually few and of a persistent similarity.

Just as an electric wire can carry a great number of messages at the same time in opposite directions, so the human brain can carry many thoughts at once in simultaneous layers of meditation. Both Dimny and Klemm were thinking in several strata at once. She annoyed him by her refusal to flirt, by her apparent inability to remember him, by her baffling mixture of innocence and shrewdness, by her mysterious errand in Belgium and her air of frank simplicity.

To bag a lot of spies at once would redound to Klemm's glory. To be diverted from his mission by a pretty girl's fascinations would be disgraceful. To throw her into prison would be to destroy the bait and drive the fish away. The only intelligent course was to disappear from her environs and let his unknown shadows keep her under espionage.

But Klemm could not endure the thought of vanishing from Dimny's presence without leaving some definite impression on her memory. It was his vanity that urged him on to rashness, and vanity of a sad sort is a strong trait of the spy-type.

Klemm had juggled many plans while he stared at Dimny, but his first remark was a sudden:

"For vy ditt you go by Dofnay?"

"Oh, I had heard that the ruins there were among the best in Belgium."

"Vat for a business you got in Belchium?"

"It's none of yours, if you please."

"Oh, but yes!"

"Then since you know your business so well, you don't need to ask me."

"Better you should not be so sharp by me. I could do you much harm, you should know. I could get you shot or put in prison. I can make it that you are de-

ported to Rotterdam, or to a detention-camp in Germany."

"You couldn't keep me prisoner in Germany."

"No?"

She almost chanted her proud answer:

"I am an American! Don't forget that!"

He laughed: "It is not much to forget. And if America forgets you?"

"She wont. She would protect me. She would come and take me away from you."

"How takes she you away? How comes she to find you? Even England cannot come into our country and take somebody out. Englishmen come by Deutschland only as prisoners."

"You are at war with England. You wouldn't dare drag America in."

"America cannot be dragged in. Yenkees cannot fight. For making money is all Yenkees are good. Ve can do vat ve please by Americans, and nothing comes out."

"You'll see! You'd better not harm any more American women."

"American women and children too! You shall see.

America sells munitions to kill Chermans.

Chermans vill kill Americans. You shall see."

He knew that the plans were already laid and the submarine equipment perfecting for the policy of ruthlessness that should be heralded by the destruction of the *Lusitania* and the scattering of American women and children among the

depths of the ocean. But he checked his indiscretion. Also he realized that he was getting no forwarder with Dimny. His only recourse was to lull her suspicions to sleep and encourage her to a rash self-confidence by pretending

that she had baffled him completely. "For your protectink, I esk you for w'y you ditt go into Hollant."

"What do you mean?"

"Since I ditt see you last vit your Mutter, I see you in Holland by Rosendaal. I invite you to rite vit me in my car. You refuset. Next I see you by light of my car try to run past de quart. Next I find you in de car of de youngk man of de Tsay-Air-Bay. For vy ditt you do dat?"

Her answer was a sudden question: "That reminds me to ask you what became of Vrouw Weenix."

"Who is it she is?"

"The poor old woman who was arrested by the Rosendaal guard. Did any harm come to her? I'd die if I thought that."

He looked into her anxious eyes, and he could not tell



THE FRONTISPIECE

her that Vrouw Weenix had been shot to death the next day after her capture. He laughed, not altogether convincingly. "Oh, dat old vomans! She iss all right. She had a passport. She ditt go back to her home."

"Oh, thank Heaven for that!" Dimny sighed. "I'd never forgive myself if I caused her any hurt."

Klemm saw that he gained ground with Dimny by the bit of good news.

Furthermore, he felt that he would prosper better with her if he pretended to give up her persecution and met her next as if by accident, especially if by accident he should be wearing his uniform. If he were to catch her either as spy or as woman, he must lay his ambush with better skill. He threw himself suddenly on her mercy.

"Miss Parcot, I make you apologies. I have been most unkind. I loose my head because you are so beautiful a young lady, and it makes me enry because you do not like me like I like you. But I know pedder now, and I esk you to forgive, please. I prove I vant to be frients vit you if you let me help you. You come here for some business. Tell me. I can help you!"

She stared at him in a new confusion. She could neither understand nor rely upon his abrupt conversion from a brute to a cavalier. She hesitated to discourage such a reformation; yet she was still uncertain enough of him to say:

"You can help me best by leaving me alone."

"You are cruel, but I know I can help you, if you permit. You have come here by Brüssel for some business. If you did not tell the consul in Rotterdam, he ditt not visé your passport. Vat is your business here?"

"I will tell you my business, since you don't know it. I have come to try to find a number of English girls who were caught in the invasion and can't get back to their homes. They do you no good as prisoners. They are only in the way."

"Engländerinnen!" he snarled. "So! You are here for English! It is English money dat hires you!"

"They pay me no money. It is for common humanity that I am working."

"But for England! How could I help you to help England?"

"It is to save your people as well as the English. There are many German girls in England who want to get home. You ought to be glad to exchange them."

Klemm pondered this unexpected situation. He had a young cousin in England. His aunt had not heard from her since the outbreak of war and was not sure that she had not been butchered by the English. His aunt had wept much and implored his aid in vain.

Whether he was decided by the chance to recover his cousin and the other girls whom German mothers bewailed, or whether he was simply trying to win Dimny to confide in him, he promised to help her. She got out the list. Its length surprised him. He said:

"It is easy for me to find dese gerls, but to get dem out of Belgium is not in my power. Only von Bissingk can do dat."

"But you say you can find the girls?"

"Sure! Everybody is in de Registratur. I find dem easy. But efter I find, it is for you to get out."

He pledged that he would tell her just where they all were. He would show her how efficiently the German enrollment-system worked. He copied the names in his memorandum-book, restored the list to her and put out his hand. Dimny could hardly refuse it now. She gave it him, and he lifted it to his lips. Then he turned for the door.

Dimny realized that he was about to get away without telling her where he had seen Alice and her mother. She was as amazed as he was when she said:

"Don't go!"

"I come beck, by your leaf."

"Do! But you haven't told me where it was you me."

He thought of his uniform and his plan to appear her presence in full regalia.

"The next time you see me, you goingk to remember me."

He bowed himself out. The first place he went was telegraph-office. There he sent a telegram in code with his code-number attached, asking No. 70 Königstrasse to send him at once a copy of the copy of the letter found on Dimny Parcot during the search at Enghien.

CHAPTER XLVI

DIMNY fastened her hat on and thrust her arms in her heavy coat; then she opened the door and tended not to see the man who dropped back into a room opposite. As she walked down the street, she passed a shop-window and her side glance caught a shadow following her trail.

She went straight toward the office of the C. R. B. She skirted the edge of a public square where a huge block of German soldiers in mass formation went through the ceremony of a dress-parade. The band was playing. Officers were saluting, horses prancing, platoons gliding past, reviewing officers like lines of men cut out of wood—with one foot raised goose-step high, the other slanting to the rear.

A group of boys were playing soldier in front of a painting sentinel. They wore helmets of paper, carried sticks for rifles and had a small log mounted on a velocipede for artillery. Their lieutenantlet gave orders in a shrill and burlesquing the German accent. They had picked up a number of German commands from the eternal repetition of them throughout their town:

"*Habt acht! Marschieren—marsch! Halt! Gewehr auf! Gewehr ab! Präsentiert das Gewehr!*" And so on to the great delight of the sentinel. But the boys had a joke they were leading up to, trusting to their heels to get them out of harm's way. This was a sarcasm on the part of the mature German boast that they would spend Christmas in Paris. The boys played it now. Their commander, after various evolutions, gave the order:

"*Nach Paris—marsch!*"

The boys marched—backwards.

When she reached the office of the C. R. B., she had a little of the encounter with Klemm, and he was on fire with a desire to kill the snake, or at least to grind him under his heel.

Dimny reminded him again that his first duty was to the hungry Belgians, but he groaned:

"How long, O Lord, how long!"

He told Dimny of the efforts already under way to reach her mother and sister. He had been telephoning, writing and sending out couriers. He expressed more confidence than he felt. What he hoped, he said he expected; what he felt might take weeks, he said might take days. He had arranged to have a description of the missing women sent to the distributing committee in every parish of the village.

"Anybody who wants help has to bring in a card of *d'identité* and a photograph and give name and property and previous condition of servitude. So if your mother and sister live on charity, as half the people have to, why their committeemen will know who they are and recognize them from our description, and let them know you are here."

"But I don't want them to know I'm here," Dimny protested anxiously. "I—I want to surprise them."

"Oh, I see," said Noll, who knew what she really feared—that if her mother and sister learned of her presence they would hide in still deeper obscurity. But he pretended

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JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

"My name is Ignatius Duhr—Nazi, I am called. I did tell you my name in Dofnay when you are in my arms. Now you are remembering, yes?"

"No!" she groaned. She cried it aloud again. "No!" and again "No!"

not to know and not even to be mystified. "Then I won't ask the Communal Committees to notify your people, but to notify us. Then you and I can go get them in my car. We ought to hear in a few days."

Dimny saw another danger: "But suppose they are not living on charity?"

"More than half the people are."

"But Mamma brought over a lot of money."

"The Germans may have taken it away from her. I'm sure she would be registered on our lists. So don't you worry any more for a few days."

Dimny's premonition was right, however. The Parcots had not joined any of the soup-lines, even under their new name of Tudesqs. The real Tudesqs were feeding on the bounty of Mrs. Parcot. They all lived with a lack of comfort or expense that would have offended a Chinese coolie, but they fared a little better than most of the Louvainese, trusting that they could eke out the dwindling sum till the "three months" of Belgium's purgatory was gone and the Germans should fold their billet-tickets and steal away. The money-supply, however, suffered frequent exorbitances because they were constantly meeting with wretches whose distinguished misery had an absolutely irresistible appeal.

The Parcots were drifting toward the bread-line and toward yet another charity, but for the present they were not among those present at the daily receptions of the communal committee of their district.

CHAPTER XLVII

HOPING little, yet compelled to wait for days until the questionnaires went out and the answers came in, Dimny resolved to make a personal search of Brussels. She began to patrol the city; and as at Rosendaal, she was teased on by the conviction that her people were in the house a little farther on, or in the second shop. She thought she saw them turning the next corner and ran after them. Often her heart would leap and beat her breast with wild exultance as her eyes made them out on the street coming toward her, for ghosts are seen by eyes made fond with grief or fear. She would press forward hardly able to keep from screaming aloud. And always it was somebody else, somebody who had no resemblance to either of them.

She asked many questions and learned the chief gathering places of the populace. She heard of the society of the Little Bees,—*Les Petites Abeilles*,—which provided more than twenty thousand little feeble children with extra nourishment. Dimny visited one of their canteens at eleven in the morning when the children were released from school to gain strength for the day.

The utter cleanliness was the work of scrub-ladies of social prestige. Dimny found sixteen hundred white soup-bowls in double rows along the slim tables. The waitresses were Belgian ladies who had in their day had servants waiting on them, but now were proud to give themselves to service.

Dimny found no sign of her mother and sister among them, but before she could leave, a Lilliput army charged through the rain and captured the banquet-board. Here there was pillage indeed, a tremendous clatter of spoons, a gurgling of soup, shrieks of conversation, a baby-Babel! There was much stratagem of baby-stares, pouting lips, honey-voices wheedling for a little more. When the soup was lapped up and the sweet rice pudding came in, they greeted it with ecstasy, dancing as they sat.

It was glorious to do so much, but tears ran with the smiles because more could not be done, because these myriads of babies must receive so little, at such mountainous cost; because throughout the world babies were crying in vain for food and slowly withering back to death

like rosebuds in a drouth. Dimny lingered to help the Belgian ladies lug the dishes away and wash them. The children had already licked them almost clean.

Failing to get any trace of her people among the Little Bees, Dimny turned with sick heart to the charity known as "The Drop of Milk." At the canteens of *La Goutte de Lait* young mothers and mothers-to-be were strengthened with extra food for their double burden. These luxurious ones reveled in a thick soup, a bit of meat or an egg and a little milk every day. They had medical advice, too, and were waited upon by ladies once great in the land. Marie Antoinette at her Trianon had played milkmaid; the Belgian ladies worked as milkmaids in the modern fashion.

Dimny blushed to seek her mother and sister in the *Goutte de Lait* canteens, but she knew that before long they might have to make their appearance there.

She walked along the bread-lines again and again, wandered the Inferno of want like a Dante searching Hell for familiar faces. She learned much of what mankind, woman-kind and child-kind can endure, and the needlessness of the vast famine wrung her to an agony of protest. But the protest died upon her heart.

DIMNY was at the office of the C. R. B. one day when Herbert Hoover came in. He looked younger than she expected, a trifle grim but not at all the saint that legend made him. It was no time for an old-fashioned prayer-master. The need was for a business man, an engineer to fight the efficient tyranny of Germany with an efficient American charity. Hoover was the boss of the one huge job, to get the most food possible to the most people possible with the greatest possible regularity—to start a manna-factory and keep it going.

Dimny watched him with that reverence for successful men of action which women still can feel. It proved a trifle irksome to the great man when Noll had made the introduction. He listened to Dimny's little speech of homage, with a characteristic silence, jingling coins and fingering a pencil as an escape-valve of his extra steam.

Dimny relapsed into an embarrassed dumbness, and Noll explained a part of her errand.

"That's more in Whitlock's line than ours," he said. "Better see him."

He dictated a note of introduction for Noll and Dimny to the Ambassador, and advised Noll to run across to the American Legation with it.

Then he turned to his infinite task as brusquely as if he were arranging for an invoice of missing machinery instead of the loaves and fishes of a Yankee miracle.

Dimny and Noll went out to lunch and then to the Rue de Trèves, No. 74, a plain square house with an American flag and a Legation seal and a plaster bust of Washington in the hall to distinguish it. They were not kept waiting long by the Ambassador.

Brand Whitlock looked more the part. He was tall and lean and ascetic. The sorrows of this people seemed to have made their impress upon him.

Dimny told him first of the schoolgirls, and he nodded. He had heard much of them and from them, but his appeals for their release had been politely denied.

As they discussed the matter, his secretary came to warn him of an impending call from the Governor General himself, the Freiherr von Bissing, then a recent name in Belgian history, but soon to gain unenviable immortality.

"He's the one man who stands between those girls and their home," said Whitlock.

"Maybe I can get him out of the way," said Dimny. "Let me at him!"

She said it with the pretty ferocity of a Charlotte Corday about to remove a Marat.

Whitlock smiled and nodded, and then turned in his plain manner and his plain (Continued on page 116)

A house of mystery! You who so enjoyed "The House of a Thousand Candles" will know what magic Meredith Nicholson can weave about a place of that sort. This story is in his best vein.



Nothing Venture, Nothing Have

By
MEREDITH
NICHOLSON

Illustrated by
FRANK STREET

BURTON was satisfied that the old gentleman in the brown fedora was following him. Several times he had tested the matter by abruptly changing his course and walking briskly in a new direction, only to find that the strange pursuer kept close at his heels. He swung round so quickly that he brushed against the old gentleman and for a moment found himself gazing into a pair of gray eyes that regarded him with keen scrutiny.

"I beg your pardon!" the stranger murmured courteously.

"Certainly, sir," Burton replied ironically, and lifted his hat.

They were at the edge of the pond in Central Park; the sun had disappeared beyond the Hudson.

"I have just finished this yarn," remarked the stranger, holding up a copy of "Wreckage," a novel that bore Gaylord Burton's name upon the title-page. "You were in the shop when I bought it, and the clerk pointed you out as the author. I come here on fair days to do my reading, and oddly enough, you passed the bench where I was sitting just as I finished the tale. I've been sauntering along behind you ever since. My acquaintance with authors has been limited, and I took the liberty of observing you a little. I apologize, sir, for what I hope you will excuse as a pardonable curiosity."

Burton caught hopefully at the idea that the stranger's motives were amiable and that at last he was to hear a friendly word as to the merits of a book he had written with much labor.

"I hope the book didn't bore you, sir," he remarked.

"On the whole, I was rather interested in it," the old gentleman replied with a slight smile. "I have read all three of your novels, and am quite familiar with your method. But—broadly speaking—I think such tales pernicious. I am morbid on the question of causing unhappiness, depressing people and making them dissatisfied and cynical. You grow more harsh, more bitter, as you go on. 'Wreckage' left a bad taste in my mouth, so you must pardon me if I dispose of it now and here."

He drew back his arm and flung the book from him; it

fell with a splash into the lake, where the swans and ducks, outraged by so wanton a disturbance of their privacy, protested with a flutter of wings and resentful squawks.

"You evidently feel deeply about it," said Burton, laughing at the man's violence. "I suppose I couldn't persuade you that the world needs to know the truth, that we of America are peculiarly blind to our weaknesses—the hard realities we've got to face one of these days unless we perish as a nation."

"Don't talk to me about perishing!" the old gentleman exclaimed with a laugh. "My name is Saybrook—Walter B. Saybrook. I live only a square or so from here—quite alone. I am dining at home; suppose you join me, and we will talk comfortably."

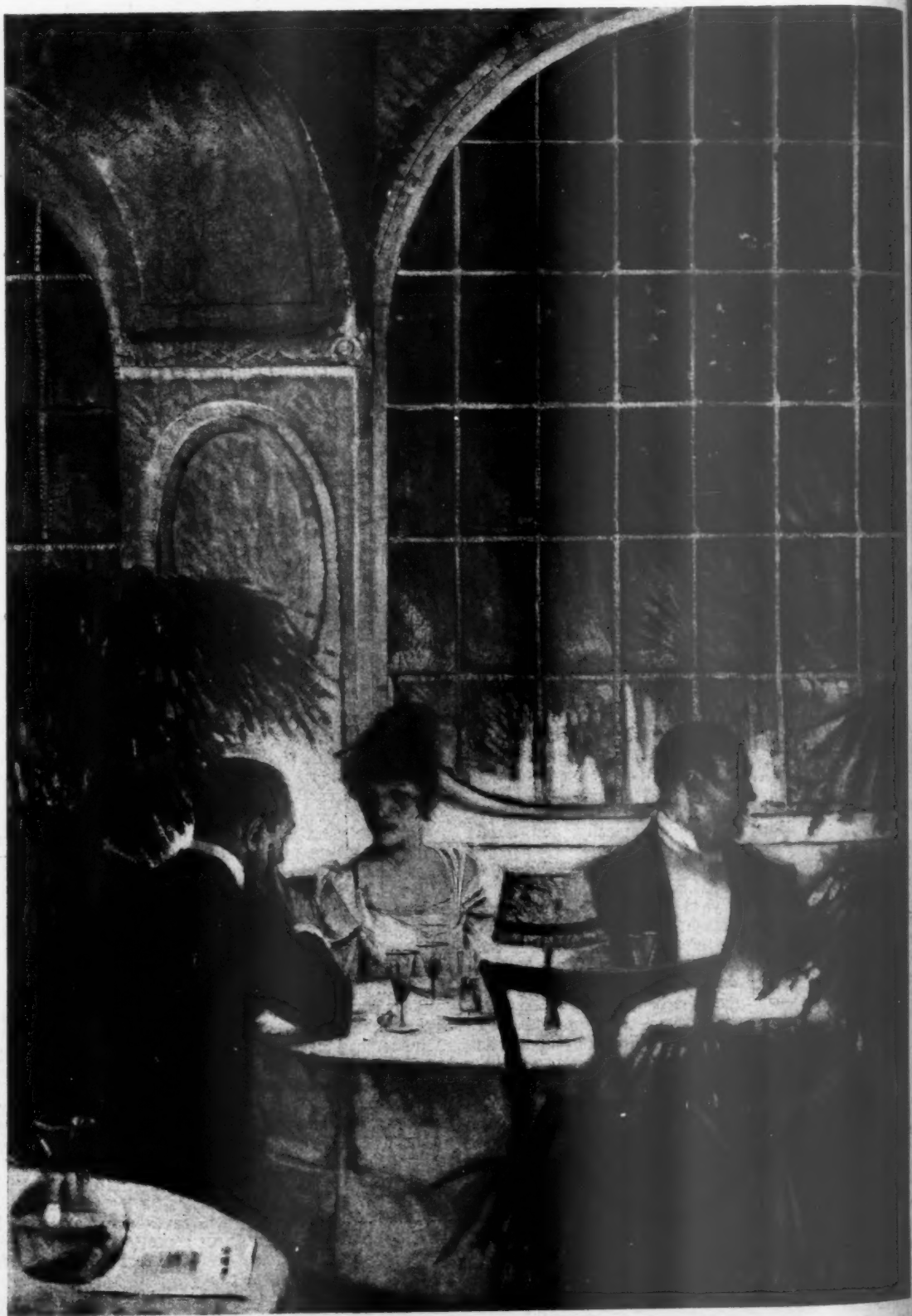
Burton hesitated; then, on impulse, he decided to go.

"Very well—thank you!" he said, and fell into step with Saybrook, who received his acceptance with a careless nod.

Burton had never spent a drearier day. "Wreckage" had been acclaimed as a work that showed growing power, but it had sold only a few thousand copies more than his previous novels. He had chosen Chicago as the scene of his tales, and had succeeded in producing a chronicle that was as fruitful as anything in Russian fiction. Burton realized that he could hardly expect to sustain himself by these writings, and had spent the afternoon debating whether "Wreckage" should not be his last effort.

"This is where I lodge," said Saybrook, drawing out his latchkey before a handsome house on Eighty-seventh Street. "Bangs will show you to a room. You will find me in the library at seven-thirty."

Burton noted with a twinge of resentment the expensive appointments of the rooms, possible only to possessors of the wealth he despised. The walls of the suite to which he had been conducted were hung with etchings and paintings instantly recognizable as works of value and distinction. He turned away with an impatient shrug, sat down



When Ledyard became engrossed in the performance of a dancer, Alice met Burton's gaze. He was not prepared for her first words: "I know very few people. Burton; I have no friends, men or women. I am very greatly in need of help."

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with a new volume of criticism and became so absorbed that he failed to notice the passing of time until Bangs announced dinner.

THE dining-room shared in every way the good taste of the rest of the house. Carved in the paneling over a wide fireplace were these words in old English letters:

Nothing Venture—Nothing Have

"That's my motto," explained Saybrook, following Burton's glance of interest, "and I commend it to you."

The butler served the dinner with a deliberation encouraged by his master's manner.

"You may remove Bill for the present, Bangs," said Saybrook, indicating a parrot that was attempting to participate in the conversation. "Bill Bones usually talks to me, and he doesn't understand just how you come to be here," he explained with a smile as the bird retired chattering.

"I share his feeling!" laughed Burton.

"I merely pay tribute to a man of genius," Saybrook replied, "or, if you please, I am quite selfishly giving myself a pleasure. And to be frank about it, now that you have your legs under my table, I have designs upon you!"

He gazed at Burton quizzically, and the gaze was so prolonged that Burton dropped his eyes.

"Let us be frank with each other," said Saybrook. "Men in your profession often do not prosper. Reputation, fame even—yes; but the mere matter of daily bread, ease of mind—" He finished his summary with a gesture.

"I have no money; to tell the truth about it, I'm in debt," Burton replied bluntly. "In getting my education I incurred obligations, and have added others since."

"You are indeed frank, and I assure you I appreciate your confidence. I assume the debts are not pressing?"

"No—hardly that. Something like ten thousand dollars has been advanced by a Chicago trust-company at the instance of a person unknown to me."

"That person," said Saybrook with his quizzical smile, "is myself. And I may say," he added casually, "that I became your benefactor when I was laboring under the delusion that you were my son!"

Burton drew out his handkerchief and passed it slowly across his forehead.

"I don't understand you," he faltered.

"Naturally not!" cried Saybrook. "In order that you may be sure I am not trifling with your credulity, I will state that the total amount I have advanced through the Great Lakes Trust Company of Chicago—a city I detest in spite of the fact that it is the source of my income—is exactly ten thousand, four hundred and eighteen dollars."

Burton drank his champagne at a gulp. Bangs gravely refilled his glass, and at a sign from Saybrook left the room.

"Let us be economical of speech," said Saybrook crisply but kindly. "I was married at thirty-five to a girl of twenty. She was beautiful, light-hearted, sensitive, gentle!" Burton, groping for clues with a deepening sense of the unreality of the situation, noted a softening of the lines in his host's face. "She remained with me six months and then left abruptly, unable to bear my harshness, my lack of sympathy with her youth. I was bent upon making money in those days, and—I made it!" he added with a glance that swept the spacious room.

"She disappeared utterly, and I have spent a fortune trying to trace her. Where her child—my child—was born, whether son or daughter, I don't know. You came under my eye just twenty years ago when one of my agents persuaded me for a time that you were quite possibly the child of that marriage. I know your history perfectly. You were orphaned in infancy; the uncle who took charge of you was a man of small means; and as you had interested me, I became, we will say, your benefactor."

Given a choice in the matter, Burton would not have chosen Saybrook as his benefactor. He had been led by his uncle to believe that a distant kinsman in California had supplied the funds for his education.

"It occurs to me," Saybrook resumed, "that you and I may be of assistance to each other. I too have made many people unhappy by being cynical and harsh. I sought a fortune, gained it, and found my hands full but my heart empty! I learned all too late that the world is full of romance, that sentiment enters very largely into all human affairs. Having made a sorry mess of my own life, I want now to help others to happiness—special cases, you know, that appeal to me. Incidentally I want to save you! You are leading a dull, morbid existence, brooding over sordidness and misery—even exulting in it at times. What I propose, Burton, is to make you my agent as the promoter of romance, the helper of those whose affairs go badly. The thought of adventure in the old romantic sense is abhorrent to you; you have gone even further and declared in your essays that it is an anachronism. But my dear boy, we are surrounded by romance; the newspapers are full of it; the houses all around us are full of it. The slums you describe with so much bitterness are full of it. Let me ask you this: have you ever been in love?"

Burton's face expressed his scornful rejection of the idea before his lips uttered an emphatic no.

"Ah!" cried Saybrook. "You shall know love! Love shall make you suffer. You shall know adventure, and adventure shall make you strong, brave, self-sacrificing! If for a year you will write no more of your dreary rubbish but serve me in such ways as I suggest, I will pay you twenty thousand dollars; and I promise excitement, variety and opportunity to serve, the possibility of experiencing the love you affect, in your ignorance, to despise. You have penetration, insight, wisdom of a sort, but your experience of life has been gained from books; your trouble is that you approach the study of society with preconceived ideas. You find what you are looking for. And a man who has never known love still gropes in darkness, grossly ignorant and unfit to write for the instruction of others."

Burton shrugged his shoulders impatiently. Saybrook was ridiculous; what he proposed was absurd. He felt strongly impelled to fling his napkin in his singular host's face and leave the house; but he was conscious of a motive behind these disclosures, and his curiosity was a-dance as to the nature of Saybrook's real business with him.

COFFEE was served in the living-room, and when it had been disposed of, Saybrook rose from a long table where he had seated himself and handed Burton a slip of paper; it was a check for twenty thousand dollars.

"You take much for granted," said Burton.

"Tut! Don't be silly! You will at once begin your first adventure. We will loaf along to the Mizzen Top, where an old friend of yours is awaiting us, Shepherd,—William G.,—a club acquaintance of mine. Remember, he knows nothing of what has passed between us, but I suggest that you report to me when you have solved the riddle that he will bring to your attention to-night. —Our coats, Bangs."

At the Mizzen Top they were conducted to a table where Shepherd was already established,—Billy Shepherd, indeed,—whom Burton had seen only a few times since they were graduated in the same class at Yale. The entertainment was of the usual roof-garden variety, and when an occasional vociferous clash blurred conversation, Burton frowned his displeasure.

In one of these interruptions his roving eyes fell upon a man of middle age and a young girl who were seating themselves at a neighboring table. The man—small, dark, with delicate, cameolike features—first attracted his attention. The man espied an acquaintance as he was about to take his seat and bowed elaborately. There was an easy, insin-



"Frances has gone," she said. "It was necessary to confer about those men who are coming. They're coming, you know, for their share of the spoils!"

uating grace in him. The girl was tall, dark, with the rounded cheeks and bright coloring of healthy youth. While her companion was giving his order, she turned her head and glanced about slowly, indifferently, with a suggestion of disdain for her surroundings.

"You have seen the finest eyes in America," remarked Shepherd, "—and, I might add, the unhappiest!"

Burton acquiesced with a nod, his gaze bent still upon the girl.

"Father and daughter," Shepherd explained. "Ledyard

is the name. He has a place in the Adirondacks and lives there most of the year—a question of his lungs, I've heard."

Saybrook looked at his watch and rose, remarking:

"You two seem to hit it off very well together. I'm going to ask you to excuse me; scratch my name on the check—will you, Shepherd?"

It had been in Burton's mind to ask Shepherd about Saybrook, but now that they were left to themselves, Shepherd seemed deeply preoccupied. He turned in

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sent that he might the more easily watch the Ledyards. The name had awakened some chord in Burton's memory, and he started when Shepherd suddenly remarked in a low tone:

"You knew Tommy Porter—he was in a class below ours, a fine fellow, the very best sort; the papers were full of the case six months ago."

"It was at Ledyard's place that Porter disappeared?" asked Burton, lifting his head quickly.

"Exactly," Shepherd assented. "A number of us who knew Tommy and loved him have exhausted every means of finding him. His only relative, a sister who lives in California, has just gone home. I must say for Ledyard that he acted very decently about the whole business—gave the detectives a free hand to ferret out the mystery. And of course Tommy may be at the bottom of Lake Mayhapo,—the generally accepted solution,—but it wasn't like Tommy to drown himself."

"Just who is Ledyard, and what was Porter doing at his place?" Burton asked.

"Ah! You've got to the crux of the matter at the first try! He was in love with this girl! He met the Ledyards in Colorado, where he had business interests. In our efforts to get a line on Ledyard, we've found him to be a free spender; his father was a highly respectable silk-importer. This chap, Eugene, lived abroad for years and married there. He was a little conspicuous at Monte Carlo at times, and once or twice mixed up in rather queer financial schemes in London and Paris, but nothing was ever fastened on him. On the face of it, he's a cultivated gentleman, an invalid, who lives on an income that must run to fifty thousand a year or such a matter. He asks people to his place—from time to time—men of substance and some social standing, usually. It's been said that these house-parties are an excuse for gambling on a big scale, by men who are good losers. From what we have been able to learn, the conventions are strictly observed at Lost Trail Lodge."

"You think, then, that Porter is dead?" asked Burton.

Shepherd frowned and gazed into his wineglass as though seeking the answer there. His quiet reply caused Burton to start.

"That's for you to find out! Saybrook suggested you as specially qualified for the job. He's an odd chap, as you doubtless know. Your meeting me here is the result of a conspiracy he initiated to arouse your interest. I'm only a cog in his little machine, chosen because Ledyard doesn't know me from Adam—nor does he know you. In a few minutes you will be put through the next degree. A man named Farnam will drop in here; he knows Ledyard, and will introduce you. Saybrook merely told me Farnam was an old friend and under some obligations to him. There's Farnam now, coming this way. I'll introduce you and fade out of the picture."

"But I don't know—" began Burton.

"Oh, you know everything I know!" exclaimed Shepherd.

"Of course it's queer, and so is the extinction of Tommy Porter queer! But Saybrook has manipulated the whole thing, and we all appear to be playthings in the old boy's hands!"

Nothing could have been more natural than the manner in which Shepherd excused himself, leaving Burton alone with Farnam, a man of thirty, who threw into the meeting

a casual air well calculated to deceive an onlooker. Ledyard nodded to him, the careless nod of familiar acquaintance; the girl turned a moment later, hesitated as though not immediately recognizing him, and then smiled and bowed. The smile faded quickly, and for a moment her glance lingered upon Burton with what he interpreted as veiled inquiry. Farnam slowly sipped a cordial.

"Do you care to meet the Ledyards?" he asked. "I believe I was to bring you together, but I'm not forcing the matter. They are different; you will find them interesting. The daughter is a wonder—a musical prodigy, I believe."

Burton, befuddled by the rapidity with which he was being passed from one hand to another, murmured a faint acquiescence. At the end of the act Farnam rose and shook hands with the Ledyards, talked to them a moment and presented Burton.

"You ought to be acquainted—similar tastes and all that," he said easily. "This is Burton, the writer."

"Mr. Burton is not more welcome for being famous," said Ledyard pleasantly. "Alice and I finished 'Wreckage' just before we came to town—a book of power, undeniably. It's clear, Mr. Burton, that you know life!"

"That's something no one can ever be sure of," Burton replied as Ledyard called a waiter and asked that chairs be brought.

Miss Ledyard was at Burton's left, her face toward him, and he was conscious that she was studying him in a long, leisurely scrutiny. Farnam addressed Ledyard directly, referring to some earlier meeting. Burton turned quickly, hearing the girl's voice.

"You think," she said, smiling gravely, "that no one can really be sure of—life?"

The pause before she uttered the last word, the eagerness with which she waited for his reply, checked the half answer half formed on his lips.

"I suppose we may never be sure of the things we covet most," he answered. "There's always the vanishing goal to keep us going."

"The people in your novels don't keep going—they die, or kill themselves," she laughed. "Would you prescribe that solution for all of us?"

"Certainly not! Pardon me for being personal, but you are too young to be interested in solutions; you are at the age of experiment!"

"An evasive answer! There's no time in our lives when we are not interested in the answers. The baby that discovers the moon for the first time and tries to grab it through the window learns very definitely that he can't have the moon."

"But he finds other moons with other names," Burton suggested.

"Ah, but you are not helping me at all!" she complained, and it occurred to him that there might be some hidden purpose in her questions. As they talked, half banteringly, half seriously, he felt her eyes searching him, perhaps for sympathy—even, possibly, for aid.

Farnam rose unhurriedly. "Sorry, but I must run along."

Here's hoping we may all meet soon again."

Ledyard talked well; he talked well of many things, with an occasional reference to his daughter for corroboration. He spoke of Burton's books in flattering conjunction with the writers Burton most admired. He was clever, diabolically clever. If Shepherd had not so frankly confessed his part in Saybrook's scheme, Burton would have

A NEW SERIES BY JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

In the next—the May—issue, we begin a new series of stories of the North by the author of "Kazan," "A Son of Kazan" and "The Grizzly." In the new stories he brings out the humor as well as the tragedy and the adventure of the Great Outdoors by following the careers of a bear-cub so cute and wise as to be almost human, and a MacKenzie hound-pup willing to lick its weight in wild-cats.

They are bully stories.

believed the whole matter prearranged even to a rehearsal of this conversation.

When Ledyard became engrossed in the performance of a dancer who was just then the talk of the town, Alice met Burton's gaze with a smile that suggested relief. She had fully awakened all his powers of discernment and analysis, but he was not prepared for her first words:

"I know very few people, Mr. Burton; I have no friends, men or women. I am very greatly in need of help."

For a moment her great eyes brightened with tears—tears that vanished instantly. She glanced at Ledyard, to make sure he was not overhearing her.

"If he asks you to come, you—you will not refuse?"

"Where—what?" The inquiry died on his lips as he saw how intently she awaited his reply. "No—whatever you ask," he answered.

She nodded, and raised her voice slightly to speak of Sorolla, whose work was just then on exhibition at the Metropolitan. A moment later the room rang with applause. It was the end of the program. Ledyard praised the dancing eloquently as they passed out and found their wraps.

The night was fine; Ledyard readily acquiesced to the girl's request that they walk home. They had an apartment for such times as they were in town, he explained. Burton crossed with them to the Avenue, Miss Ledyard setting a leisurely pace and talking rapidly as though to hold him. She spoke of the North Woods, of the coming of winter.

"You should know our woodlands! Ah, but there would be a place for a writer to sit, to ponder, to work!"

Her purpose was transparent enough. She was throwing Ledyard the clue to ask Burton to his house.

"People who write," she persisted, "must be very sensitive to their surroundings. For that matter, I suppose we are all influenced by environment."

"The spirit of man needs room! I need air—I must have air!" Ledyard struck the pavement sharply with his stick.

There was something like a cry in his voice. Burton felt the girl's hand for a moment on his arm; but Ledyard recovered himself and began talking of places identified with the composition of musical masterpieces.

When they had reached the Ledyards' apartment-house, Burton declined an earnest invitation to enter, promising that he would call upon them at some other time.

"Ah, but you've got me started now; there's no end to the things I want to discuss with you, and we fly back to the woods to-morrow," protested Ledyard. "Alice!" he ejaculated, "what do you say to asking Mr. Burton to go up with us to-morrow night? Give us the week-end or a month—as you will, Burton. Really, we should take it as a great compliment."

"We should be most happy, I'm sure!" replied the girl with a tremulous eagerness that did not escape Burton.

"You are more than kind; I shall be glad to go," said Burton.

He bade them good night and walked away, regretting that he had yielded. . . .

Lost Trail Lodge proved to be a big house with the

woods behind it and the lake stretching away from its front windows. As Burton unpacked, he reflected seriously upon his status in a house to which he had been cordially welcomed but where he was under obligations to spy upon his host. He was still amazed that he had accepted Ledyard's invitation. And the twenty thousand rankled. For all he knew, he might have sold himself to the devil.

At noon he went downstairs, and seeing no one about, went for a walk. He discovered now what had escaped him on his arrival—a bungalow set farther back in the woods the matter of a hundred yards from the big house, but evidently a part of Ledyard's property. As he reached the bungalow, Alice came out on the veranda, followed by another young woman, and waved her hand.

"So you've been taking the air! We thought of course you'd hide yourself till luncheon. Miss Shipley, Mr. Bur-

ton. I'd forgotten to explain that I have a shack all my own, where Miss Shipley and I live like hermits when we like. You see, we make a great noise with our piano, and Father built the bungalow for me two years ago, so I can make all the row I want without fear of disturbing anyone."

"Miss Ledyard is an incorrigible night owl," remarked Miss Shipley. "She doesn't begin to get interested in her music until midnight."

Miss Shipley was tall, fair and somewhat older than Alice, Burton judged, with a wealth of brown hair, and blue-gray eyes. He was wondering as to her position in the Ledyard ménage when, as though to set his mind at rest, she remarked easily:

"To chaperon a girl in a lonely place like this is a sinecure, and often when Alice runs away, she doesn't take me along."

"Oh, you caught me when I was still young enough to scold, so I don't need watching any more," laughed Alice.

The Lodge certainly offered ample room for Ledyard's daughter and her companion without the bungalow annex, and the explanation that Alice's devotion to the piano made it convenient for her to live in a house of her own left Burton wondering.

Ledyard greeted them from a desk by one of the living-room windows, and they went to luncheon. Burton became immediately conscious that Miss Shipley was an important factor in the household. Ledyard, with a word of apology to Burton, asked her about some of the bills which, it seemed, it was her duty to pass upon.

The talk became brisk, Miss Shipley taking her full part. Several times it occurred to Burton that Tommy Porter had probably occupied the very seat at table to which he had been assigned. Possibly, he reflected, he had been asked to the Lodge to assist in overcoming any doubts or prejudices aroused by Porter's disappearance, and this thought was disconcerting. He was talking directly to Alice when, turning his head quickly, he surprised Ledyard and Miss Shipley in a telegraphic exchange. She had frowned and shaken her (Continued on page 12)



"I've had it—ever since that night—to end the whole thing if I got desperate."

A grim tragi-comedy of cactus-land, wherein the sound of guitars and dancing is followed by that of pistol-shots and hoof-beats — by the author of "A Stratagem of the Border."



As his horse leaped forward, a noose settled around him, binding his arms in a vice-grip to his body.

A JESTER *on the* BORDER

By HARRY IRVING GREENE

WHEN a daughter was born to the wife of Matt Thatcher, owner of the Thatcher Ranch, Big Matt rounded up the fifty-

Illustrated by
GAYLE HOSKINS

came the señoritas with their prettiest dresses made still gayer by crimson ribbons, walking in little giggling and chattering groups, arms locked girl-fashion.

odd Mexicans who lived upon the place and addressed them somewhat like this:

"Now, *hombres* and *mujeres*, you *sabe* a little thing like this don't happen every day, so if you want to pull off a *baile* in its honor, go to it and send me the bad news for the *música* and *cerveza*. Whoop her up all you want to, so long as you behave yourselves—but mind you, no quarreling or rough-house. Now get t'ell about your business, every jack and jinny of you." So, touching their forelocks and murmuring "*Muchas gracias!*" they went back to their work, and that night they sent in to Rollins, twelve miles away, and engaged their beer and musicians. The next Saturday night was decided upon as the date, and Felipe and Tony, whose little houses had the best floors, agreed to move their furnishings out upon the prairie and surrender their abodes to the toes of the revelers for the evening. Expectantly all waited.

The dancing was to begin at nine o'clock, and as that hour approached, from out the small Mexican houses those who were to participate began emerging. First

It was firefly season, and they had fastened numbers of those small creatures in their hair, and as they passed through the darkness they looked like a small constellation of twinkling stars gone upon a pilgrimage. Behind them, clean-shirted, clean-shaven and with red and blue handkerchiefs about their necks and an occasional sash that gleamed like a stream of flame, strolled the men and boys—frolicking, laughing, scuffling in the horseplay of youth and overflowing vitality. From the guitars and violins first arose the soft notes of "*La Paloma*;" then as that changed to a dreamy Mexican waltz, the youths selected their partners and began treading the floor with sedate grace. It was not a fandango, for there were no castanets or unnecessary motions. They were nice girls and decent young fellows, and they waltzed with the severest propriety.

To do them special honor, out from Rollins had come Señor Muñoz to watch them. Señor Muñoz was the Mexican banker of that place, and he was smiling, usurious, fat and forty. Loudly he laughed and quipped as he clapped the young men upon their backs, and fatly he sighed as

with the assurance of wealth and middle age he chuckled the señoritas beneath their chins and whispered words in their ears that set them to giggling and blushing. Half jealous, yet half proud that this rich man had honored them with his presence, the young bucks watched him from the corners of their eyes, showing their white teeth in forced smiles but saying nothing.

Midway in the evening a ten-year-old *muchacho* came sidling bashfully up to the banker, diffidently tugged at the great man's coat-tail and standing upon his toes, said something to him which none of the others could hear. For a moment Muñoz hesitated; then with a patronizing wave of his hand to the company he stepped out into the darkness alone. Shortly thereafter a pistol-shot boomed from the nearby prairie, and at its sound the music stopped as does a sentence when it runs against a period. Five minutes later, when some of the bolder spirits took lanterns and went forth to investigate, Muñoz was found sprawling dead upon the grass with his revolver, fully loaded, lying at his elbow.

Owing to the wealth and prominence of the dead man, the killing attracted more than ordinary attention in that land of not infrequent homicides. Muñoz had been a *Shylock*, a usurer and a double-dealer, and the tears shed over him were mostly of the crocodile order; yet when a rich man is murdered, there must be sacrificial blood sought for the altar. And when a couple of days later it was learned that one Carlos Mendoza had crossed the river going south, the morning after the murder, that Carlos had owed the defunct one money and that the pair had quarreled about it, there was no longer any doubt as to who had done the killing.

Furthermore, the testimony of the boy who had been the go-between tended to cinch the guilt upon Carlos beyond all question. The boy affirmed that he had been met by a strange man in the darkness, who had told him in Spanish to run inside and tell Señor Muñoz to step out immediately on a matter of business—a request which the boy had obeyed in all innocence. His description of the stranger as seen through the heavy darkness tallied to a dot with the make-up of Carlos, and further investigation seemed unnecessary. Remained only what was to be done about it.

With Carlos now over the border and in No Man's Land, pursuit by peace officers was about as practicable as following a man into the infernal region. It was doubted if a regiment of cavalry could go into that country and escape wholesale massacre; still, as a matter of form and to show that his heart was in the right place, the dead man's partner offered a reward of one thousand dollars for the capture and return of the fleeing one, and had the reward posted conspicuously. It was generally conceded that this would end the matter. From whatever angle one looked at it, the enterprise of capturing Carlos was about as allur-

ing as would have been a proposition to slide down into Hades and paste tracts on Satan.

The Hot Tamale Kid came loping up the one long, low street of Rollins with a sardonic grin around his thin-lipped mouth and a basilisk gleam in his narrow eyes. The Hot Tamale Kid was but a trifle over the thin imaginary line which separates manhood from infancy in the optics of the law, but he had done things. A few months before, when he had become twenty-one, he had celebrated the occasion by the knifing of a Mexican who had refused to give him a drink of *mescal*; and then he had immediately been graduated into the major league of bad-men.

Nor need one be surprised that this puppyish blood-lapping created a thirst. When a young gentleman has in his veins the blood of an Apache mother who as a child found outlet for her maidenish spirits in staking people out over men's nests, as well as a father who breathed his last in the throttle of a running noose, hereditary characteristics are prone to develop early. So, having decided that he would be a good bad-man, he had shot the Mexican's partner and then hopped on his horse.

"I hope nobody will be fool enough to come after me," he had said nonchalantly as he rode away.

And ordinarily nobody would have been. But it had so happened that the high sheriff was connected in a roundabout way with a man that the last Mexican had killed, and that fact supplemented by a hundred-dollar reward had spurred him into action. A few days later he had located his quarry in a



The Kid now finished reading the notice of the reward for Carlos.



The Kid's revolver flashed in the sun. "And now I wonder what you have done about it," he said.

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hatched and woven jacal where lived the youthful and altogether alluring widow, Señora Maria Rubia Tina Cervos—which same was located within the metes and bounds of an uncharted prickly-pear chaparral.

There, coming face to face with the Kid, the officer had gently but insistently told him that he would have to return to Rollins and go through the motions of a trial. Whereupon the Kid had objected in his usual self-assertive manner. He had, however, had the gallantry to have the sheriff's body sent back to the widow at his own expense, calling her attention to the fact that he had not shot the diamond out of her late husband's star but had purposely missed it by a full inch. So, with the hope that they would not be fools enough to send anybody else after him, he had bidden Señora Cervos a grateful farewell and vanished mirage-like.

The Kid was a queer proposition. He had the vices of a scorpion, a centipede and a black-velvet spider—also some virtues. He never shot a man in the back or told an untruth about a woman.

He was a wizard with weapons. Along the eighteen hundred miles of Mexican border are many men who are exceedingly skillful with firearms, but they all touched their hats to the Kid. Although a short time previously he had been much wanted, since his rout of the De Rosa bandit gang at La Ratama ranch, in which he killed four of them, his former little misdemeanors had been erased from his record and officially he was forgotten. Of course there had been no legal acquittal of him, but public opinion had veered strongly his way, and he was again free to wander where he pleased, unmolested. Deep down in his interior, each man felt that anyone who had put up such a fight for the benefit of the community as had the Kid was entitled to a fresh start with a clean slate, and law-abiding citizens shook him by the hand and told him so.

As for the Kid, he only grinned and bore his honors modestly.

"You shore are treating me white, and I'll try and not get into any more devilment," he had answered them. "Only trouble with me is that temper of mine is set so time that all you've got to do is blow on the trigger, and she begins shooting."

The Kid now finished reading the notice of the reward for Carlos, sat meditatively for a moment and then spurred up his horse and went

slipping away with his elbows held wide and his reins high in cowboy fashion.



Slowly, with fingers outstretched, their hands arose. He backed his horse into the chaparral. Cold and deadly his voice came to them.

The Kid had made up his mind to do something, and as was usual with him in such cases, he was losing no time in acting.

That afternoon found the Kid once more across the river and winding his way into the *Zona Libre*. He had never seen Carlos, but he had obtained a good description of him and it was not long before he began to run across the other's trail. But Carlos was doing quite a bit of dodging and fast riding, and it was four days before the Kid finally caught up with him. The pursuit ended at Juquila.

At this place Carlos, evidently having arrived at the end of his journey, had put up his horse and settled down to taking things easy. He seemed to have plenty of friends in the place, and was spending most of his time drinking and playing cards with them. Sizing up the situation, the Kid stabled his horse also and at once fell into the drowsy life of the adobe and plaster town, sauntering about and making eyes at the señoritas and taking a drink with a chance acquaintance now and then—a typification of the idle and care-free *vaguer*. Yet wherever Carlos sauntered, his human shadow also went trailing; and in the course of a little time the pair had struck up a friendly acquaintance. It was not long before the Kid learned what had brought the other to Juquila.

Señorita Rosa Echandia was warm of color and slender, and she had big, lustrous eyes that it was beyond her power to make behave as a girl's eyes should. She was a respectable girl, however, and lived with a respectable aunt in a respectable street that debouched upon the tiny plaza, and Carlos was wont to sit for hours below her little balcony, which was about seven feet above the street. That he was in love with her there could be no question, while as for her feelings toward him—well, that was what the Kid wanted to make sure of.

Of course the Kid could have shot the other man at any time, or even have roped him and made him prisoner; but neither of these plans was to be considered. The reward specified that the other man must be captured and returned alive to justice for trial; therefore a dead man would not fill the order, even should the Kid be able to convince them that he had killed the runaway; while as for making a man a prisoner and taking him into accursed Gringo-land for trial—well, of course the very idea was a joke too absurd to be thought of. Hard and stark the Kid seemed to be up against it, and for the next few days he did a lot of tall thinking. Then he hit upon something that had the promise of success attached to it, and he immediately began putting his little plan into execution.

As a starter the Kid rode by the residence of Rosa when that young lady was sunning herself in her balcony, and when opposite her, he unstrapped his *reata*. Giving it a flip, he opened the noose to the size of a cart-wheel and then set it rolling around him upon the ground like a hoop, while he sat erect in his saddle and manipulated it with a wrist that was exceedingly cunning. It was really very pretty work, and the girl, who was a judge of such things, was unquestionably interested. And when her errant eyes followed the rope to its source and she saw a tall, clean-cut young *caballero* sitting like a centaur in a nickel-mounted saddle and smiling at her, her eyes dropped, rose and then fell again most bewitchingly. Thus, having made her aware of his existence upon earth, the Kid took the next step.

He borrowed a guitar, strolled down her little narrow street and leaning against the wall beneath her balcony, began strumming. The balcony was empty when he began, but the Kid had both skill and perseverance, and presently instinct aided by a lightning upward flick of his eyes told him that he now had an audience of one. Softly he began singing. His voice was not at all unpleasant; besides, his song was all about *corazones*, *flores* and *amor*,—hearts,

flowers and love,—and what girl would not listen should a tall, clean-cut young *caballero* play a guitar skillfully and sing musically of such things beneath her balcony? And Rosa, hearkening for a while, at last sighed softly as by some mischance her handkerchief slipped and fell fluttering to the ground. Promptly the Kid pounced upon it.

"Ah, señorita!" he cried with a sweep of his sombrero. "Grant me the honor to restore thy lost property. Or"—and he glanced at her appealingly—"better yet, let me keep it." Blushing very prettily, she shook her head and frowned—but oh, those eyes!

"The señor is kind to pick up my poor handkerchief. He is so tall—perhaps he can reach it to me." Twice the Kid made strained effort to hand it to her, but each time missed by a few scant inches, and at last he shook his head in despair. Of course, it never occurred to him that he might have tossed it to her, or to her that she might have leaned forward a bit and taken it. It would seem that they both acted very stupidly for such bright young people.

"And so," he said at length, "it cannot be passed up by hand; therefore I must bring it." But this Rosa promptly negated. One must be careful before she invites strange *vagueros* into her home, even though they be tall and straight, play and sing in a way to make one's heart flutter and can juggle a *reata* most cleverly.

"No, señor—I will come down and get it." So a moment later she stood before the Kid flushed and diffident—but oh, those eyes!

CARLOS, coming along half an hour later, found them standing there so engrossed with each other that at first they did not appear to notice him. And when they finally did stop talking long enough to look up, they saw a dark face set with a pair of eyes in which lurked a green devil of jealousy. The Kid grinned.

"So it is you, *amigo*!" he said lightly to the newcomer. "I am glad you have come. Señorita Rosa, this is my good friend Carlos."

The girl tittered. "For two years now Carlos and I have been *amigos*," she said coily. "Is it not so, Carlos?"

He nodded. "*Sí, Rosa mía*," he said. And then he turned upon the Kid. "And you did not know of this?"

"Never dreamed of such a thing," returned that young gentleman truthfully. "But I am delighted." He raised his sombrero. "And now, knowing that the Señorita Rosa is safe in such good company, I will say *adiós*." They nodded, and up the street he went lazily, strumming his guitar as he strolled, and carrying with him the memory of a parting flash of great black eyes that simply could not be made to behave as a girl's eyes should.

But the next day the Kid was back again, as well as the next one and the next one after that. Rosa, really in love with Carlos, nevertheless could not resist the temptation of this final flirtation with this strange young *vagueros* before she consented to marry the other; for what could be finer than to witness the rivalry of these tall, straight young lovers over her as she reveled in the sullen jealousy of the one while she smiled upon the other?

Carlos, with a long-toothed devil gnawing at his heart, was more than once of half a mind to call his rival to account, but always there was something about the other man—an air of lazy preparedness, a glare that sometimes lurked in his eyes—that made him hesitate and think anew. And then one day in a fit of jealous passion he did exactly what the Kid had hoped for. He went into the sulks, and instead of going to see the girl he but sat all day in José's joint muttering and drinking. Things were coming the Kid's way, and he now decided to give them a little boost.

Now, it so happened that over on another street dwelt the *viuda* Salazar. The young widow Salazar was Rosa's only rival in Juquila in the way of being good to look at, but she was nowhere near as nice a woman as was Rosa,

and knowledge of that fact but made the latter doubly jealous of her. One day when the Kid was playing to Rosa and singing little snatches of love-songs in her ears while Carlos still came not, he suddenly threw his instrument aside and seized both her hands. "When are we to be married, *querida*?" he demanded abruptly. As has been the immemorial custom of woman in such crises, she let her eyes fall.

"But I am to marry Carlos," she protested, flushing.

The Kid pressed her hands the tighter.

"When he is spending his time with Señora Salazar?" queried. She gasped.

"I cannot believe—Carlos to pay attentions to the *bruja*—that hag!" Her anger flamed like oil aflame. "I but knew that—"

"I understand he carries her handkerchief and shows it off, boasting that it is hers," continued the man with a fine regard of veracity. Rosa's rage robbed her of speech. With fingers flexing like claws and her bosom seeming ready to burst, she sat staring while the Kid's easy tongue ambled on.

"He will probably be over this evening and try and make up with you. Should it so happen, you will doubtless have the opportunity to slip your hand in his coat pocket. Do so, and see what you will draw forth."

Thus having planted her mind with the rank weed of suspicion, he picked up his hat and discarded instrument and went strolling away, leaving her in a wild-cat fury. Presently he rounded a corner or two, and a few moments later found himself in the house of the Señora Salazar with whom he had picked up an acquaintance a few days previously. For the next two hours they chatted and smoked cigarettes together, at the end of which he had her *buenas tardes* and went sauntering off to the little drinking-place of José in search of Carlos. During his tête-à-tête with the widow he had been uncavalier enough to steal her handkerchief, dainty and perfumed.

Carlos, mooning at a little table which stood upon the rough stone floor at José's, gave the intruder a basilisk glare as the latter entered. Paying no attention to the eye-glances that were aimed at him, the Kid pulled up a stool, ordered more drinks and let his hand fall lightly upon the other's sleeve.

"Ah, Carlos, *amigo*," he began amiably, "your looks are enough to frighten away the cockroaches; yet I am your friend and you know it not. First, however, wet your lips with this fresh *cerveza*, and then I will tell you."

But the other remained sullen. "I drink with no *mal-dor*," he returned coldly.

The Kid raised his glass. "Very well, if you wish to dwell in ignorance. But it was of Rosa that I was about to speak. However, perhaps you do not care to know."

Thus beguiled, the jealous one grumpily picked up his own glass as well.

"To hear about her I will drink with you—" He took a swallow and set the glass down. "And now I listen."

The Kid became appeased. "Then you shall hear. This afternoon I spent half an hour speaking with her about you, and she said many things. Should you go to see her this evening, your reception will be a warm one. Tell me much I can promise you."

Carlos' scowl grew thinner. "And she wished to see me?"

"Unquestionably."

"Then, *amigo*, you will pardon me. I will shake hands with you." Thus, with the hatchet buried, they sat amicably together for another hour; then with a mutual "*Buenas noches*!" they parted. As Carlos walked away, he was ignorant that he carried in his coat pocket the dainty and perfumed handkerchief of Señora Salazar.

THAT evening as dusk fell soft as black feathers, Carlos again sought the home of the fair Rosa. Laughingly smiling she received him, and together they sat

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Cadex, coming along half an hour later, found them standing there so engrossed with each other that at first they did not appear to notice him. And when they finally did stop talking long enough to look up, they saw a dark face set with a pair of eyes in which lurked a green devil of jealousy.

by side while he told her of his devotion and the hollowness of all things earthly save her near presence. And she, listening without answering and seemingly engrossed by his words, yet ever sent one hand stealing nearer and nearer to him under cover of the thickening darkness until at last the slim fingers crept into a pocket as mice steal into a closet. Something soft and dainty reposed there, and drawing it slyly forth, she crushed it in her hands and raised it to her face. One breath was enough. Strong to her nose came the abominable scent of the one she despised most of all creatures of earth, and with a little cry she hurled it from her as though it had been a noxious insect. She whirled upon him.

"Oh, thou *embustero*—thou *perro*! To come to see me with such words after your falseness! It would serve thee right should I scratch thine eyes out. I but listened to hear how great a liar thou wouldst make of thyself. Begone from me."

ENTIRELY guiltless of wrongdoing and completely overwhelmed by the violence of her passion, Carlos could but stammer:

"But Rosa! *Amada mia*! Why treat me so when I have done nothing but love you? Listen—" But seizing him by the shoulders she hustled him ignominiously into the street, slamming the door upon him and leaving him staring at it in a maze of bewilderment. Entirely unconscious of the cause of it all, he tried vainly for a moment to reënter; then with an imprecation he turned his back and slunk silently into the night.

And the next day returned the Kid.

Lazy of gait and puffing his cigarette nonchalantly he appeared beneath the balcony and stood smiling good-naturedly up at her. Dark semicircles underscored the eyes of Rosa, and her lips had lost their curve, but she motioned for him to come up, and slowly he did so. He seated himself at her side.

"The señorita seems unhappy," he said solicitously as he scanned her. "Can it be that bad news has come to her—that love has gone amiss?"

Her bosom gave a spasmodic upheaval. "It was as you said. Last night he came, and I searched the pocket. And I found—" She bit her red lip until the blood fled. "Dios! That men can be such dogs!"

Instantly the Kid became transformed into an impassioned lover. "Did I not tell you, dear one? Did I not say that only I loved you and would be true? Come with me, *querida*! I will take you across the big river, and we will be happy. And some day I will take you even to San Antonio that you may see the big city. Will you come?"

She hesitated. The Kid was tall and straight even as was Carlos—and as she now saw, even better to look upon. And what a revenge upon the other man it would be to fly with his rival! How he would bite his nails and curse them! She wavered.

"And when?" she asked softly. He drew closer. "Tonight. I will have the horses ready as the darkness comes prowling. We will ride fast and be upon the other side by morning. Do you come?"

For a long minute she was silent as she fought the great battle out within her bosom. Never could she love Carlos again after his treachery—never trust him; while as for this new lover—perhaps in a little time she might care for him even as she had once loved the other. Her head sank lower.

"Sí," she whispered.

The darkness fell; and the Kid, coated and spurred, stepped inside the little place of José. It was deserted save for the proprietor, and ordering two glasses of *mescal*, he raised his own.

"Drink to the health of my bride-to-be, the Señorita Rosa," he commanded. José looked at him in much astonishment.

"But she is to marry Carlos," he protested.

The other laughed. "She is to marry me. She was to marry him, but I cut him out." The Kid appeared to have been drinking and lurched a little. "The joke is too good to keep; therefore I tell it. I stole the Señora Salazar's handkerchief and slipped it into Carlos' pocket. He found it there, thought he was untrue to her and chased him away with her broom as an old woman chases a cat. Then she agreed to marry me. She rides with me to-night and we shall reach the ford by morning. Dios! How Carlos will rage when he hears how I fooled them both and made her break up with him." With another laugh he emptied his glass and turned to the door.

"Adiós, José. And don't forget to tell him the joke after I have departed. You will split your sides laughing at the way he will act." Out into the night he went, with sparkling.

Carlos, entering two hours later, was pounced upon by the voluble José. With eyes that grew wider at each word and lip that crawled upward until it showed the full length of teeth white as fangs, he listened until the other was finished. Then with a hoarse cry he went plunging toward the little stable where he kept his horse. Over his shoulder his voice shaken with rage, came to the ears of his friend:

"A light, José, a light! Make haste in the name of Jesús. *Mi caballo! Mi caballo!*"

WITH a good two hours' start over his enemy, the Kid was setting but a medium pace, that Rosa might not become saddle-weary. Of course, he did not know how soon the other man would learn of the elopement, but he did know that the wind was right and that by stopping and listening now and then he would be able to hear the pursuer's horse in time to give him ample warning. The girl's hand slipped into his own as if for comfort, and the Kid clasped it tightly.

"Think you he will follow us?" she asked anxiously as they loped side by side. By the starlight she saw his features break into a thin grin.

"You can bet that he will," was the answer. She tightened her fingers about his own.

"And he will catch us—"

"At the river."

"And then—" She shuddered a bit, and her brow tossed like a choppy sea. "And then you will kill him. Her companion shook his head.

"No, I don't aim to kill him unless I have to." Then Carlos, as she told herself that she now did, deserved death as he undoubtedly did for having deceived her, nevertheless drew a breath of relief at this assurance from her new lover. The Kid went on:

"I aint going to kill him, because I know it would make you feel bad, and also because I'd hate to hurt anything that loves you. And Carlos does love you."

She uttered a cry of unbelief.

"Never. When one loves, he is true. He was but a fool. Else how could he do such a thing? And how can you avoid killing him should he catch us?"

The man grinned. "Rosa, *querida*, I will tell you what I am going to do. Upon the opposite side of the ford on the river I am going to wait for him and make him prisoner without harm to him. Perhaps then he will tell me something to say to you. But you must leave all to me for you know not the ways of the country into which we are going, nor its language. Do you promise to obey me in all things—for your own happiness?"

Dutifully she bowed her head to his superior wisdom. "Yes, my husband-to-be, I promise."

The half-moon rose, cutting the flying clouds like a scimitar. The cool night-wind whistled softly past their ears. As steadily as machines the smooth-gaited animals were rolling the miles behind them at the tireless speed of a wolf's lope—good for all night (Continued on page 69)

An old-fashioned love-story of the sort our parents used to enjoy, by a new Red Book Magazine writer.

The JIGSAW

By LAURA L. HINKLEY

Illustrated by WILL GREFFÉ

HOWARD BROOKFIELD was occupied with a jigsaw picture-puzzle when Ben Conant dropped in, half a dozen numbers of *Popular Astronomy* tucked under his arm.

"Something worth reading there!" boasted Mr. Conant. "Something you can put your mind on!"

He glanced with kindly but unconcealed contempt at the jigsaw puzzle. It was spread on one of those little invalid's tables that swing about as you please. Howard pushed it aside; but Mr. Conant, brisk, precise and wiry, drew out his eyeglasses and bent his thin, severe profile and graying head over the eccentric bits of wood.

"Makes a picture, eh!"

"It's harder than you might think!" explained Howard. "Those little corners and curlicues are deceiving!"

"And you can tell by looking at them which pieces go together?" queried Mr. Conant indulgently.

"Not always. I can tell by trying. It's like life, full of meaningless perversities and jogs and vacancies; but get it together right, and it makes a picture. The jigsaw of destiny has cut us into these odd, contorted shapes—" But seeing a shadow of boredom in Mr. Conant's eye, he broke off, laying his hand on *Popular Astronomy*. "What's the best thing here?"

Mr. Conant brightened. He sat down opposite Howard, letting his eyeglass-chain coil back into its button-shaped holder.

"There's an article there on 'Eclipsing Binaries' I consider one of the best things yet. Clears up the whole question of the Beta Lyræ type of variables."

Astronomy was Mr. Conant's hobby. He kept a telescope on the sleeping porch at Mrs. Parrot's, where he had lived for years. Long since, Howard Brookfield had suggested to somebody that Mr. Conant ought to exhibit his telescope and the starry heavens to the high-school pupils with astronomical conversation; and this had become an annual custom, Mr. Conant's interest in education being subsequently recognized by an election to the school-board. But he had not come to-day to talk about Beta Lyræ, as Howard perfectly understood.

First and last, I wonder how many affairs of our town—what tales and traffics and tragedies!—edded around that wheeled chair! Howard never left it except to be helped to bed. Sometimes the bed claimed him for days together, and then Mrs. Brookfield turned callers away with word that Howard was having another of his spells. But except for those lonely intimacies with pain,—of which he never



Esther Wilson, sole amateur of art in Clearview. She painted Howard's portrait as St. Francis of Assisi.

spoke,—Howard was always seated in the wheeled chair, and was always ready to listen. He had a genius for listening.

He was the confidant of half the high-school youngsters, boys and girls indifferently; and all the teachers advised with him about supplementary reading and special programs and problems of discipline. He was the unofficial consultant of more people than ever guessed anything about each other. There was nothing remarkable about the advice he gave them, except that it worked excellently when taken. I don't think he cared especially about giving advice. He just listened.

We all liked Howard, but nobody particularly admired him, with the possible exception of Esther Wilson, sole amateur of art in Clearview, who painted his portrait as St. Francis of Assisi. The portrait was very bad. Even we could tell that,—none of us thought Howard handsome, but he wasn't as ugly as that!—but we hesitated to say what we thought, Esther being our only art authority as well as our solitary artist. Esther herself relieved the situation by

destroying the portrait, we heard, with tears of rage. Afterward she used to exclaim passionately, that if people thought Howard Brookfield commonplace, let them try to paint him!

THE wind skirled along the cottage eaves. Mr. Conant's eyebrows twitched together; he fidgeted with his eyeglass-chain. Howard waited.

"The school-board holds its annual election in two weeks," stated Mr. Conant pugnaciously. "The board will drop one teacher, or accept a resignation if offered."

"Miss Annen?"

"Now, don't tell me," returned Mr. Conant irritably, "that she has no other means of support; Clearview has employed her for a considerable time, and her work this year has been exceptionally poor!"

"She's had some bad kids," observed Howard mildly, "—three of the Caffertys; and she had the grippe pretty hard in January."

"That's not the point," retorted Mr. Conant. "Miss Annen's record has never been more than fair."

"Another chance," suggested Howard, "under better circumstances—"

Mr. Conant waved it impatiently away. "She's unfit to teach. Never had any business in the schoolroom anyway—sour old maid!"

"But what," said Howard softly, "will Rachel do?"

"What's that to me?" snapped Conant. "A majority of the board—since I talked it over with Mr. Meserve today—have agreed to drop her."

Howard's eyes dwelt upon him—graying head, thin, severe profile, trim, erect figure—as if he were some particularly obstinate and unadjustable bit of the jigsaw puzzle called life.

"The interest of the pupils is paramount!" insisted Mr. Conant. "You sentimentalists make me tired!"

"But you are right," said Howard quietly. "The children come first."

"Of course I'm right!" said Mr. Conant. He added, twitching his eyebrows: "There's no feeling, you understand—no hostility against Miss Annen personally. In fact, I regret—" He coughed.

"It'll give her a black eye," observed Howard, "to be turned down here."

"That's what I wanted to speak about. She'd better resign before the board-meeting. Some of her friends ought to suggest—"

"Give me a week to think about it," said Howard.

"You? Oh—I only thought you might know the proper person."

"I'll do," said Howard sadly, "as well as anyone."

In their absorption, they had missed a quiet opening of the front door and a brief, rubber-removing pause in the hall. At this moment, preceded by a light tap, a slender, blonde woman in rather shabby winter wraps entered the room. She was neither young nor old, but just now her colorless face and flaccid figure wore the temporary age, the drooping, devitalized look, of teachers at the end of the day's work. At sight of Mr. Conant she straightened quickly, and a dash of red came into her wan cheeks. The weary line of her mouth tightened. She made a motion of withdrawing.

"Oh! I didn't know anyone was here! If you're busy, Howard, I won't stop!"

"Not at all! Not at all!" Mr. Conant, rising, nervously added his protest to Howard's. "I was just going, Miss Annen!"

Howard made no effort to detain him, filling the awkward moment with very small small-talk. Not till Mr. Conant had gone with the air of a righteous man misunderstood did the woman speak again. She clenched her slim fingers tight in her lap as the low-voiced question burst through the indifferent decorum she tried to assume.

"He was talking about me?"

Howard nodded without expression.

"He's against me!" she cried tensely. "He's the one, really! The others wouldn't— What did he say?"

"He seemed to think the schoolroom wasn't the best place for you."

"What does he know about it!" she exclaimed vehemently. "Meddler! What business has he got on the school-board, anyway? Cranky old wretch!"

"You don't like teaching, Rachel?"

She made a passionate gesture. "Better than starving! What difference does that make? I've got to do it! I've got to keep my job! You know I could manage that room next year!"

"Yes," assented Howard, "I know you could."

The touch of championship softened her mood.

"Oh, it's the last straw!" she panted. "The children are awful these dark days! Nobody has any mercy! And that man working against me! Heartless—"

PUBLIC-SCHOOL teachers seldom cry. Their calling capitalizes self-command. But Rachel Annen, biting her twitching lips, pressed her handkerchief fiercely to her suddenly averted face.

Howard's eyes, turned from her, rested unseeingly on the jigsaw puzzle. If Esther Wilson could have seen his face then, she would have had another try at the portrait or perished in some divine despair. It was the face of entire comprehension and sympathy.

A commonplace, but sufficiently difficult problem, the case of Rachel Annen. She hated teaching, but she could do nothing else. To prepare to do anything else would take money, and Rachel had none. Howard knew—no one had ever told him, but he knew—about the farm of the unsuccessful brother-in-law with the large family, where all Rachel's scanty savings went. If she left this school, under a cloud of official disapproval, the difficulty of getting another— No, she must stay! But Mr. Conant—

Howard turned to Rachel.

"Never say die!"

"I wouldn't take any of that cheer-up talk," she choked, "from anyone else; but I guess you—"

"You've got three reasons to cheer up," said Howard quietly. "In the first place, I'm quite sure—but you mustn't ask me why—that you can have your place again next year if you want it."

"Howard!" gasped Rachel.

"In the second place—have you got any spring clothes yet?"

"I haven't dared spend a cent with everything so uncertain. Howard, are you sure?"

"Then get the prettiest and most becoming outfit you can find. You've got perfect taste in dress, Rachel. Let yourself go a little."

"But—and you let me sit there and make a fool of myself!"

"Esther Wilson said once your hair ought to have some thing rose-colored next to it."

"The idea of your remembering that!"

"Well, you know best. But get some nice things quick. That's important."

"But what's the use, if—"

"To make other people think you successful, and to make yourself feel successful. You're safe, anyway, because if I should be mistaken, you'll want to look your best applying elsewhere."

"Oh, I can't. I can't apply—"

"In the third place—" Howard paused; and his gaze, a strange, speculative gaze, dwelt intently on Miss Annen.

"In the third place," he repeated, averting his eyes as if afraid of their betraying some confidence, "you've got the wrong idea—about Ben Conant!"

"The wrong idea? How?"

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"Oh, before I forget: I was wrong the other day about Miss Annen. A reflection doesn't matter particularly to her. With a woman, you know, there are—
other opportunities. You were right about her being wasted in the schoolroom."

"He isn't heartless! He isn't a meddler, or cranky—and what if he is a bachelor? You—" Howard broke off. His smile was rich and strange. Reminiscent surprise, sympathy, railery, reproach, mingled subtly and delicately therein. It went completely over Rachel Annen's bewildered head.

"Do you mean that he isn't opposed to me? Did he say so?"

"Ben Conant," pursued Howard analytically, "is shy and sensitive and lonely. If he seems hard—well, you know how it is when you've got to fight the world alone!"

"I should say I do! But what do you mean about Mr. Conant? Hasn't he opposed—"

"Underneath," interrupted Howard, "he's different! He's got two soul-sides; one to face the world with—" He left a suspended pause, the length of the omitted words. "He's kind," mused Howard dreamily, "and tender and very true."

Rachel looked at him perplexedly.

"Ben Conant!" repeated Howard in the laden tone of one groping among thoughts too deep for words. His strange, speculative gaze returned to her. There was vivid interest in it, and inquiry and irony. The subtle smile touched his lips again. He looked away quickly.

The little clock on the table against the wall struck half-past five. Rachel sprang to her feet.

"I must go. Howard, you've taken such a weight off my mind—if you're sure?"

Swiftly he caught a magazine from the arm of his chair.

"There's an article here on 'Eclipsing Binaries' I want you to read carefully, thoroughly!"

Dazedly she accepted. "But why—"

"Couldn't you work a board-member a little if necessary? Good-by! Don't forget the rose-colored hat!"

RACHEL came out into the snowy street, relieved, bewildered, strangely light-hearted. The wind had fallen. The lowering sun, fighting through his gray shroud, shot long weird arrows of light gleaming across the snow.

But was Howard sure, thought Rachel. He had been so odd. What had he meant about Mr. Conant? Something he had almost seemed to mean she dismissed again as she had dismissed it in Howard's presence, without a flicker of fancy or a stir of pulse, as too impossible for thought. But Howard must have meant something! No, no! It was too preposterous! Mr. Conant! Howard couldn't have meant—Mr. Conant! The man whom she feared and almost hated!

Rachel became aware that her heart was beating hard and fast, and her breath coming quick as if she had been running. She felt violently disturbed, resentful, upset and a little sick. Why was she so hideously moved at this outrageous idea? Must it not be because there was something in it? It was not because she wanted to believe it. She hated Mr. Conant, hated, hated him, as she had never hated him before! She hated Howard for telling—what had he told? Nothing! Nothing! Her hatred veered to herself and took the color of scorn.

"I'll do something!" she told herself furiously. "I won't go on—like this!"

Passing Dora Hancock's millinery shop, she went in and asked to look at the spring hats.

What cannot a woman forget, looking at the spring hats? It was not until fifteen minutes later that her mind reverted to that quotation about two soul-sides. She was trying on a soft gray hat with graceful brim faced in delicate rose, when the words came to her:

—One to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

"But that's good on you!" exclaimed Dora Hancock enthusiastically. "Look how it brings out the color in your face!"

That evening Rachel read the article on "Eclipsing Binaries," angrily forcing herself to concentrate on its uninteresting and incomprehensible periods. She did this partly out of gratitude to Howard, partly out of mixed motives toward Mr. Conant, chiefly curiosity regarding all his thoughts, and partly to mortify the wanderings of the fleshly mind.

Gem Davis, of the high-school seniors, came in on an embassy from her mother about keeping up Tommy's school-work till his lame ankle got well. Gem noted the magazine on Miss Annen's table. Only one person in Clearview took *Popular Astronomy*. Gem had seen it piled on Mr. Conant's sitting-room table at Mrs. Parrot's when the class went to look through his telescope. It was odd, Miss Annen's having one. She mentioned it to her seat-mate next day.

Rachel Annen pondered Howard's hint. It did not occur to her to doubt his sincerity. It wouldn't, if you knew Howard. Besides, what reason could he have? The soft impeachment of Mr. Conant sent Rachel's fluttered memory groping backward. Had he or had he not looked through the gilded bars that separated him from common men—Mr. Conant was cashier at the First National Bank—with special significance on such a day? Was there not a peculiar tone in his utterance of simple phrases: "Good morning, Miss Annen!" "Pleasant day!" "Indorse it on the back, please!" Surely his smile—his half-impatient, half-indulgent smile—had meant something.

How erect he stood behind his golden bars! How immaculate and orderly he was! How swift and sure his motions! How commanding his eye! In vain she cried to her shrinking soul that she had never thought of Mr. Conant that way! She was thinking of him that way now, with a force and continuity that astonished her. The dizzy hours reeled past her, and nothing happened; but the face of the world changed; the foundations of life rocked. So, as of old, does a grain of mustard-seed, cunningly sown, move mountains.

How pathetically, how passionately, how changelessly, women love love! Rachel Annen, vovless, vocationless nun, felt her chained-up heart leap and quiver in its shackles at the far-off, whispered footstep of its deliverer.

SUNDAY afternoon, Mr. Conant dropped in again at Howard Brookfield's. It was another gray day. The continued cloudiness had not improved Mr. Conant's temper.

"Well, here I am!" he announced querulously. "You wanted to see me?"

He expected another absurd plea for mercy on the incompetent public employee and anticipated a grim satisfaction in the firmness of his refusal.

"Awfully good of you!" said Howard gratefully. "I wanted you to explain some points in this article on 'Solar Prominences.' I can't get it through my head. Oh, before I forget: I was wrong the other day about Miss Annen."

"Ah!" said Mr. Conant, foiled of a chance to be disagreeable but not conceding anything.

"A reflection really doesn't matter particularly to her."

"Do I understand," asked Mr. Conant, surprised, "that she has secured another position?"

"Well, not a position, exactly!" Howard smiled significantly. "With a woman, you know, there are—other opportunities."

Mr. Conant looked quite blank.

"You were right," continued Howard, "about her being wasted in the schoolroom."

"I—" began Mr. Conant.

"She's the sort of woman to find her place in—well, in this other sort of opportunity." Howard put his significant smile on the job again.

Mr. Conant was not an observant man, seeing much of terrestrial life, as it were, through an inverted telescope; but no man could have failed to interpret Howard's smile. "You mean," said Mr. Conant dazedly, yet with some pleasure in his own acuteness, "you mean—a—a matrimonial opportunity?"

"I've no right to say anything!" said Howard hastily. "I haven't said anything! Only—Rachel Annen is a very attractive woman!"

Mr. Conant stared. "You mentioned the decision of the board to her?"

"No. It doesn't matter, does it? There's plenty of time. Now, about this spectrohelioscope?"

The ensuing dissertation was interrupted by a soft, hesitating tap. In answer to Howard's "Come in!" a slender, blonde woman entered the room.

She was dressed in a modish spring suit of soft gray; the jacket-lapels opening over her fluffy white blouse just showed the rose-colored silk lining, matching precisely the delicate trimming of her graceful gray hat.

On the little white triangle of neck elusively outlined by the lacy edges of her blouse, a fine gold chain clasped about her neck dropped a pendant of tiny coral roses, exquisitely varying from the inward-turning tints of jacket and hat.

At sight of Mr. Conant, her cheeks announced a new motif in the symphony of rose, and her blue eyes, mysteriously brightened and deepened by the surrounding color contrast (or something else), hid under swift white lids. And she was young—with the consciousness of beautiful clothes well worn, and interfusing this a deeper youth, the youth of April pulses and burning dawns.

"I got your note, Howard!" she said breathlessly. "Am I too early?"

"No, no!" As if recalling something forgotten, Howard fumbled magazines beside him.

"Don't go, Mr. Conant! I want you to explain that. —There's something here I thought you might use for your May Day program. Sit down and look it over!"

He waved her carelessly to the handiest chair. (Mrs. Brookfield could have told you that Howard had fussed all morning arranging the chairs.) The pale light from the window gleamed along Rachel's fair hair lying softly under the rose-lined brim, defined her delicate profile with cameo clearness, and lent her complexion a shadowy translucence.

Mr. Conant from his equally inevitable position on the other side of Howard, could hardly avoid looking at her save by a determined effort. To do him justice, he made none. On the contrary, abruptly uncoiling the slender gold chain from its button-shaped holder, he adjusted his eyeglasses and frankly stared.

The rose of Rachel's cheek renewed itself; her gray-gloved fingers turned a page. She crossed her knees nervously, and her stylishly short skirt revealed surprisingly pretty ankles—unsuspected under the conservative skirts of yesterday—emphasized by gray-topped, shiny-buttoned shoes and the merest suspicion of gray silk stocking.

These details, as details, were lost upon Mr. Conant. The totality grew upon him momentarily. Certainly Miss Annen was, as Howard had said, a very attractive woman. He himself, absorbed in her professional qualifications, had not hitherto noticed her personal charms. Pride and compunction mingled with the memory of his impersonal severity. It was hard for a public official always to deal justly with these soft and appealing individuals. Certainly, as he had told

Howard, such a woman was wasted in the school-room. Mr. Conant frowned slightly, recalling something else Howard had said, something indefinitely disagreeable.

The conversation, sustained

Responding to the breathless interest in her eyes, he told her about light-curves, and radii, and inclination of orbit. He drew diagrams for her enlightenment.



by Howard, for Rachel studied her magazine and Mr. Conant answered absently, drifted to the latter's favorite topic, the variable stars.

"Now in these eclipsing binaries," said Howard, glancing at Rachel, "I suppose the stars are always about equal size."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Rachel involuntarily.

"Aren't they?" Howard looked at her, urgently questioning.

"Sometimes the dark one is ten times the larger, and only one tenth as bright!"

Mr. Conant took off his glasses, polished them carefully on his handkerchief and put them on again.

"But I don't understand," faltered Rachel, "how astronomers know."

"Mr. Conant can tell us," suggested Howard.

Mr. Conant told them. He appeared to be telling Rachel principally. Responding to the breathless interest in her eyes, he told her about light-curves, and radii, and inclination of orbit, and relative surface brightness, and mean density. He spoke of elongation, attraction, radiation, eccentricity, ellipticity, and longitude of periastron. He moved over to a convenient chair at the window beside her and, adjusting his eyeglasses, drew diagrams for her enlightenment on the backs of envelopes and the margins of magazines. The rose-and-gray hat bent toward his shoulder. Rachel was intelligent about the diagrams. She had seen some of them in the article which she now knew by heart.

At length Mr. Conant, allowing his eyeglass-chain to recoil itself, descended far enough from the variables to meet his own surprise.

"But I didn't know you were interested in astronomy!"

Rachel blushed. "I don't know anything, really," she protested. "Only—the stars are so—wonderful!"

Mr. Conant smiled at her very kindly.

Heaven helps those who know what they want. It began to rain, a soft, straight, windless drip.

"Oh," cried Rachel, "I promised Mrs. Kerndt I'd be back for early supper!"

"You'd better wait," counseled Howard. "You can't spoil that new hat!"

Mr. Conant smiled indulgently. "My umbrella is large enough, if you will trust me to protect the—new hat!"

As they left the doorstep, he resumed eagerly: "Professor Russel had a series of papers in *The Astrophysical Journal*—"

At the Spring Street crossing, they passed a high-school girl in a wet wool cap and dripping raincoat. They were quite unaware of the encounter. Not so the raincoated one! It happened to be Phila Dean, confidential seat-mate to Gem Davis, no less observant than her friend.

She announced her conclusion at the supper-table.

"Say, Mr. Conant is going with Miss Annen!"

"What?" cried her mother. "That old maid?"

"No!" exclaimed her father. "Why, Meserve says he's ag'in' her on the school-board!"

"I don't care!" retorted Phila. "I met them walking together, and he was talking away, and couldn't take his eyes off her, and not looking where he held the umbrella; and she had on a perfectly dandy new broadcloth suit, and that swell model hat Miss Hancock had in her window, and Gem saw some of his magazines up in her room."

Overwhelmed, the parents believed.

"Did you know," said Mrs. Dean at the Ladies' Aid committee-meeting, "that Mr. Conant is paying attention to Rachel Annen? Yes, Phila's seen them out walking together, and he lends her magazines."

"Heard the news?" queried Mr. Dean, leaning over the harness-shop counter. "Ben Conant's sparkin' that Annen girl that teaches. An' Meserve's been tellin' round he was tryin' to kick her out o' the job!"

"S'pose he done it fer a blind?" marveled the customer. "Well, them old baches is pretty cute! Say, he aint givin' no spring chicken, neither!"

The human drama in Clearview does not lack audience. Rumor was hotfoot on its neighborly way when the unconscious Mr. Conant called at Howard Brookfield's on Wednesday morning. He declined a seat, fidgeted across to the window and cleared his throat.

"I understand from you," said Mr. Conant, frowning "that—ahem—that Miss Annen thinks of marrying?"

"No you don't!" retorted Howard. "I didn't say so. I don't know whether she's thinking of it or not."

This, of course, was only officially true. Howard had a very clear idea of what Rachel Annen was thinking but rack and thumbscrew could not have torn it from him. He leaned toward his frowning visitor.

"Between ourselves, Mr. Conant, in the strictest kind of confidence, I don't mind saying that it's my opinion—my opinion, mind, and nothing more—that Miss Annen will have an offer, a decidedly advantageous offer—oh, in the course of a few months. What she'll do about it is her own business, of course."

MR. CONANT had not given attention to social phenomena, but even he sensed an improbability in Howard's knowing what he professed to know.

"You have this," he asked dazedly, "from herself?"

"Certainly not!" answered Howard sternly. "What do you take her for? My information comes from an entirely different source."

"Miss Annen," said Mr. Conant gravely, "is a most unusually, a most extraordinarily, intelligent young lady. I hope this man is worthy of her."

Howard looked him over thoughtfully. "Between ourselves, I doubt if he is, quite!"

"Some one," hinted Mr. Conant, "in Clearview?"

"Is there anyone in Clearview," retorted Howard temptuously, "fit for a girl like Rachel Annen?"

"Possibly not," said Mr. Conant stiffly. Few ears could have detected a certain fine undertone, but Howard was a genius for listening. He backed water easily.

"Jim Wells has gone, you know; Tom Halladay's married, and—you're a confirmed bachelor!"

"I?" said Mr. Conant. "Oh! Yes, yes! Certainly!"

Howard seemed to consider the subject closed, and broke a piece or two into the incomplete jigsaw puzzle that stared at his elbow.

"What I wished to say," resumed Mr. Conant, "is in case of a probability of that kind, the board might not could well afford—in fact, should—give Miss Annen a complimentary reflection."

Searching the table for a missing piece, Howard responded absently if cordially: "Good idea!"

You would never have guessed he had spent a restless night fearing it might not occur to Mr. Conant.

"Your information, I assume, is confidential?"

"Absolutely," said Howard emphatically.

Mr. Conant fidgeted and twitched his eyebrows.

"I might mention to Mr. Meserve that facts of which I was previously unaware have altered my stand?"

"First rate!" assented Howard.

Mr. Conant crossed to the door, laid his hand on the knob, paused and turned.

"You would not say positively that any engagement exists at present?"

"I would say positively no engagement exists at present."

"Nor any binding understanding?"

"Nor any binding understanding. Don't be misled by my mere personal impression. Mr. Conant. Why, Rachel Annen may refuse the fellow and be back in her place in a year!"

"That is a risk we must (Continued on page 75)

If you were a poor German sailor, how would it strike you to be set adrift in an open boat with no more mercy than if you were a mere Englishman or American or neutral? Another exciting story of "The Scum of the Seas."

The QUALITY of MERCY

By ROY NORTON

Illustrated by ROBERT W. AMICK

"There are six men here ready to die," said Captain Bill, "—men who probably will die if taken before German judges. Why not die here?"



GO where one might, on the water-fronts of a hundred ports scattered and clinging to the shores of a score of seas, seafaring men would shake their heads and grin at the mere mention of Captain Bill Main. And sailors told tales of him in the dim recesses of those abodes where the beat of breasted waters sounds through streaming bows and the fore-castle-lights plunge and swing—tales not all of which were lies. Scarcely ever were they twice told alike; but in one feature all of them, legends and lies, fancies and facts, agreed—that point being his reckless, hard-bitten, resourceful courage. Smuggler, gun-runner and sometime outlaw that he had been, inevitably commanding "scum of the seas" that could find no berths aboard respectable, dainty ships, he had by repute the saving virtue of being "a man of his word."

The evil men do is self-advertising; the good is like "the brave deed done alone in the night." Hence there came a day when the seafarers were amazed, and speculated with puzzled comments, when it became bruited about the Atlantic ports that the *Acirema*, that stanch and disreputable steam schooner which had been chased by the gunboats of a half-dozen different navies, had boldly sailed into Newport News, had been docked and was being repaired. Furthermore, Captain Bill had been seen as an honored guest at a table where sat officers of the United States Navy. Inasmuch as truth is the most difficult of all gossip to believe, most of those who heard the tales promptly dismissed them as being most extravagant and extraordinary lies. And yet these were truths.

Ships are like women; a black reputation cannot be obliterated by a coat of paint and new top-gear. When the *Acirema* left the dock flaunting prosperity, spick and span, refurbished and overhauled from engine-room to bridge, glorified by new paint, dignified by new bridge-work and polished brass, other ships without the taint of a shadowy past seemed to swing on their anchors and turn their backs upon her as if fearful of contamination, quite as if they lifted their clean skirts lest they somehow brush

this harlot of the seas. When the *Acirema* broke out the American flag astern, they appeared to bob indignantly as if they objected to her patronizing their own milliner; but the flag went up, and more marvelous still, its use was not only sanctioned but saluted in divers ways by those grim arbiters of the blue-water fashions, the battle-ships and cruisers whose officers watched her depart.

A few signals fluttered up on the headland. A man in the signal-station laboriously scrawled in his record: "*Acirema*, steam schooner, bound for Cherbourg with munitions of war, 10:27 A. M. All clear." Captain Bill, lean and lithe, gray-headed and gray-eyed, moved restlessly on the bridge and scowled at the open, sunlit expanse as if his new and legitimate rôle were unable to offset forty years of seafaring in most of which he had been compelled to mistrust, fear and evade all other travelers of the sea. He could not overcome the habit of regarding all other sails as enemies. The words were actually in his mouth to alter the course and set wide of a twin stream of smoke which his trained eye suggested might come from a war-boat of some description. He had forgotten that all war-boats in these waters were now his friends and allies.

It took Captain Bill days to overcome habit. It required hours of introspection to convince him that by one pitched battle in a southern sea in defense of American lives and an American flag he had wiped the old slate clean and was beginning life again. There were no enemies now save those who were enemies of his flag, and for them he gave but little heed and spared no breath, save for an occasional curse, sincere, heartfelt and bitter. He was very proud of his instructions. They were not much as far as indicatory evidence of a government's trust was concerned, but he had been ordered to cherish them with care, and destroy them in vicissitude. That made them doubly valuable.

There was a small three-inch gun up in the bows of the *Acirema*, canvas-clad. It had been granted by the same government. Whenever his eyes fell upon it, Captain Bill began to feel a new sense of responsibility—grave responsibility such as becomes a man who feels that he is part and parcel of a great government swaying and directing a great and broad-flung land. He brooded over this in the loneliness of his new cabin abaft the charthouse, across



A heavy voice roared through the megaphone: "The master's boat, ahoy! Pull over here! If you don't, we'll sink you!" "Tell 'em to sink and be damned," exclaimed one of the men; but Captain Bill lifted a commanding hand. "Pull toward them," he said tersely.

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hundreds of leagues of sea as the *Acirema* pursued unmo-
lested her uneventful way. And as for his crew, once
known as "scum of the sea"—

"This crew," declared MacHarg, the engineer, "has gone
astray. Since the old man took to wearing a uniform, it
washes its face. Pretty soon it'll be takin' baths. Aye,
mon, it's a reformation ye nae can ken!"

A GRAY mist of fall hung over the waters on a dawn
when the Irish coast was but four hundred miles
away, and all watches had been doubled. A gray, chill sea
threatened, with sullen promise, to make heavy waves
within a few hours; and wandering gulls, infallible weather-
prophets of the air, screamed and flashed restless warn-
ings. The crow's-nest, swaying under the lumbering
swell and the thrust of screws into a half cross-sea, was
tenanted by Glover, the Texan, who swore steadily, stodgi-
ly, audibly, as if to keep himself company, but his alert
watch never relaxed vigilance. No peace sailor, this, but
one whose eyes from childhood had been trained to search
distances for danger.

Suddenly, in the midst of a monologue, Glover stopped,
gripped the tiny rail as if to steady the ship herself, bent
forward and out, and became rigid. For a full quarter-
minute he waited, peering through the gray curtains that
shut off the horizon. It was there again—the thin shape
flattened into half-obscurity against the background of
wave and weather, almost colorless, reared like a rock
of blue-gray on the surface. The Texan hesitated no
longer, but raised his voice in a shout that was half
startled, half jubilant and wholly significant.

"Submarine on the port bow, point and a half! Coming
awash!"

Another voice echoed. The feet of the bridge-watch
clumped heavily into haste as the man ran to the port
wing, where he too clutched a rail and peered as if
by narrowing his eyes to visualize the menace. Bells rang
from the palpitating heart of the *Acirema*; men poured
hastily from hatch, companionway and fiddley, and the
clang of shovels and roar of forced draught told that
boiler and engine-room were aroused to the danger. The
gray rock enlarged as if heaved from the depths by sub-
oceanic pressure.

"Sta'bo'd the helm! Hard down!" a quick and in-
cise voice behind the wheel ordered, and the quarter-
master knew that Captain Bill had taken command. He
whirled the spokes without looking around to assure him-
self of the fact, and the vibrations told him that the
new steam steering-gear of the *Acirema* was responsive.
She swung her nose in swift obedience. Her screws began
to thresh as if restless and rebellious of restraint. She
seemed to careen and give as she took her new course and
raced away with the seas. She throbbed with unaccus-
tomed energy, almost buoyantly, as if glorying in a return
to adventure where life depended upon adroit and speedy
escape. It was as if she had cast off her new cloak of
respectability, and was again the corsair.

"The sub's coming out, sir," announced Burns the mate
to Captain Bill, and it seemed that the words were scarcely
concluded before a shell plunged after, then abreast of the
Acirema, and exploded a hundred yards ahead of her,
sending up a jet of water into the growing light.

When the alarm was first given, an ex-gunner of the
United States Navy who had been promoted to the exalted
position of gun-captain had run to the canvas-clad shape
in the bows and with two assistants begun to cast off the
lashings. Men strained at the cover of the huge box by
its side, wrenched it open and lifted one of the sinister,
slender, polished shapes. The breech of the gun clanged
open; the shell was inserted; and now, obedient to Captain
Bill's orders, the *Acirema* turned at bay, recognizing the
utility of flight. She was throbbing now, as if with

She seemed to charge down in a wide semicircle

toward her enemy, as if intent upon ramming her, even
as a man in fury rushes to lay hands upon an unexpected
antagonist.

The captain of the gun forgot the early discipline
learned in those years before he had become a derelict,
forgot everything save that his target was fair. He waited
for no orders, but fired. Across the murk flashed a shape
that landed upon its mark and exploded; and even in the
dim light its effect was visible to those trained men who
watched expectantly for the result. The crew of the
Acirema burst into a cheer. Something seemed altered out
there in the actions of the U-boat. It swerved violently,
rolled, swung off for a moment and then, while they
watched, straightened grimly out to its work. Again the
gun in the bows spoke, but the shot exploded wide. There
was no answer from the submarine. It seemed intent on
some sinister purpose of its own.

"You've cleaned off their gun, Tom!" shouted a man
who had been watching, and the gun-captain swore and
grinned. Their voices sounded loud and exultant in the
stillness that had held all others in thrall.

And then from the crow's-nest came another battle-
pitched call: "Look out! Look out! Torpedo on the
way. Port the helm, hard! Port, for God's sake, port!"

PROMPT as were the orders, quick as she obeyed, leap
as she did to respond, it was too late. The white
line of foam was upon her direct and true. Her very
swerve seemed to assist it to its target. Men leaped back
from rail and stanchion as if to find greater security
amidships; then the *Acirema* and the line of white met.
There was a strained fraction of a second stretched into
infinity by its portent, and an explosion that seemed to
lift from the very breast of the seas the ship that was
part of it. Her stanch old bows that had defied many
waves and many dangers arose swiftly upward as if in
anguish and surprise; her engines suddenly stopped, and
she traveled under nothing save her own way.

"Got us, by thunder! Got us, he did!" exclaimed a
voice, as if thoroughly astonished at such a fact.

And instantly, as if released from a spell of silence,
other voices joined in, roaring and shouting expletives,
filled with anger, shrieking for a fair fight, the voices of
fighting men, undismayed, defiant and asking nothing
more than equal odds. A huge negro, half nude, came
running up from the engine-room followed by blackened
oilers and stokers.

"Cap'n Main, sah! Cap'n Main! Tha's a hole blowed
the bow fo'wa'd squah open, sah! And Mistah MacHarg
reckons we's done sunk!"

"Where is MacHarg, Washington?" demanded Captain
Bill.

"Standin' by the ingines, sah!"

Captain Bill swung toward the mate.

"Get the boats ready to lower away, Burns," he said,
his voice sounding extraordinarily calm and unexcited now
that the short-fought battle was hopelessly lost. Then
he turned to the tube and called: "MacHarg, come on
deck if it looks hopeless. Is there a chance? None what-
ever. All right. Come on deck."

He had scarcely ceased speaking when a roar of steam
told that MacHarg was taking the last precautions to pre-
vent an explosion, by releasing his boilers, and a moment
later the Scot stood in the midst of the men by the boats,
calmly pulling a reefer over his grease-stained jumper.
The *Acirema* gurgled and throbbed suddenly beneath their
feet. Already her stern was lifting, and her bow was but
a foot or two above the rollers. There was no time to
lose. There was nothing further to be done. The job
was finished, the voyage at an end.

Captain Bill gave a troubled glance at the ominous sea,
at the waiting men, and ordered the crew to the boats.
He stalked inside his cabin and returned with the ship's

papers and his pet sextant, a present from the officers and men of the U. S. gunboat *Troy*, and walked calmly to the rail. Burns, the mate, was standing up in the boat he commanded, which lay a dozen yards off, palpably fearful that Captain Bill would delay his departure too long. MacHarg was lighting his pipe. Glover, the Texan from the crow's-nest, was rolling a cigarette. Washington, the negro in the Captain's waiting boat, was fending off and on with his huge naked arms, to prevent her bumping against the lee side of the dying *Acirema*. And there, insolently coming nearer and watching the death-scene, was the U-boat that had brought them to this dread and hopeless situation. Captain Bill's face hardened murderously, and then he clung to the Jacob's ladder and waited for the boat to uplift and receive him. He did not look back at the *Acirema*. He could not. She had been his, a faithful partner, loyal servant, and his all. He could not bear to see her die. His voice was husky when he ordered: "Give way! Smartly now. Backwash might get us." He did not turn his head to see her sink. Nothing but a far-reaching swirl of water told him that she was irrevocably gone—that and a chorus of rough exclamations and curses from the men in the boat.

"She was the best ship that ever was, sah," said Washington sympathetically; but the Captain did not respond.

A HEAVY voice roared through a megaphone: "The master's boat, ahoy! Pull over here! If you don't, we'll sink you!"

"Tell 'em to sink and be damned, sir!" exclaimed one of the men; but Captain Bill scowled at the speaker and lifted a commanding hand for silence.

"Pull toward them," he said tersely, and his men sullenly obeyed.

"Come around to the lee side and put the ship's master aboard," ordered a German officer, neat and stiff in his braided uniform. On the low deck of the U-boat a machine-gun asserted command of the situation. Captain Bill gestured his men to obey, and at the cost of wet legs where a wave slapped against him as he stepped across to the wet steel side-steps, he climbed upward to meet the man in uniform.

"You brought your papers with you?" demanded the German officer, without that courtesy of "sir," which prevails between men of the sea.

"Yes," replied Captain Bill, deliberately making the same omission.

"Then follow that man below," ordered the U-boat commander, and he turned and gave an order in German.

Captain Bill saw that with instant obedience and clockwork discipline men sprang to individual tasks and recognized in these movements preparations to submerge.

"Just a moment, Captain," he protested indignantly. "What you do with or to me doesn't matter at all! But you aren't going to leave my men out here in open boats with a sea making, are you? You might at least give them a tow toward—"

The German laughed boisterously.

"Tow? Of course I'm not going to tow them anywhere. And as for you—"

"Why, man, it's murder!" roared Captain Bill, losing his air of calmness. "The glass is falling, and—"

"Shut his mouth and take him below!" the officer ordered in German, and Captain Bill was unceremoniously hauled toward the steel steps leading downward to the electric brilliancy of the interior. He saw in an instant the uselessness of struggling, and again dared not, lest his own men recklessly attempt aid and thereby lose their last chance of life. He was taken to a tiny box of a cabin where he threw himself distractedly into a chair while two men stood guard over him. He heard the vague, unfamiliar sounds of strange machinery, endured new sensations of movement, and savagely repressed his passions.

For his own predicament he wasted no thought; but under his grim, rocklike exterior there was a wailing cry of horror and pity for those valiant, time-tried comrades of his left up there to die on the surface of the sea. To have been with them and shared the Great Adventure would not have been so bad. Perhaps they had died easier had he been there to join them, "scum of the seas" and hardened, reckless wanderers that they were.

HIS meditations were interrupted by the entrance of the commander, who ordered him to stand, and took the papers from his hands. The Prussian deliberately turned his back while he scanned the papers and logbooks, chuckling now and then; but had he fully appreciated the character of this common tramp-skipper who patiently stood behind, thoughtfully staring at the floor, the commander would have died. For Captain Bill Main was calmly weighing the chances as to whether he could, with his naked hands, kill his captor before being himself slain.

"So you had the *Acirema*, eh? And you are the master Wilhelm Main? *Acirema*! Ridiculous name."

"Spell it backward," harshly flared Captain Bill, and the officer did so with the pleased interest of a boy over a puzzle, and laughed contemptuously.

"Well, Captain Wilhelm Main, of the *America* spelled backward, as it should be,—always going back,—so you had munitions aboard?"

"As you can see for yourself."

"And you were the owner?"

"Yes."

"And I suppose now you have learned that fighting a great country like Imperial Germany is folly? Are sorry you jumped in with your own boat?"

"Not by a long sight! I'd do it again, if it were not for my men; but what has this to do with us? Why am I here? Why didn't you leave me with them? What right have you to—"

"Listen!" the commander interrupted harshly. "You were summoned to surrender and did not. You—"

"That's a lie!"

"If you interrupt me again, I'll have you gagged, you swine!" stormed the commander, half rising from his seat and glaring at Captain Bill, who thereupon relapsed into wooden silence.

"You fired on my boat and killed three of my men, wounded three more and destroyed my forward gun! You then tried to ram me. You want to know what I'm going to do with you? I'm going to take you to Zeebrugge and turn you over to a naval court to be tried and I hope hanged for malevolent resistance! That's what I'm going to do! How do you like that, you dollar-scraping Yank?"

He snapped a thumb and finger derisively, and he sneered malignantly when Captain Bill did not respond. As if dismissing a troublesome insect with a brush of his hand, he gestured to the guard, who in turn indicated to Captain Bill that he was to accompany them. With head erect and a face as immobile as that of a Sioux Indian being led to torture, he followed the man in front and heard the steps of the one behind through the narrow steel alleyway until they came to a narrow door.

This door was unlocked by the guard, and still obedient, Captain Main stepped inside and heard it closed and bolted behind him. He stood within, surprised to discover that in this narrow cubicle there were other prisoners as helpless as he. Five men he counted in that confined space that had been built to serve but one. They looked up at him from their places on the improvised bunks into which they had crawled to economize the restricted space. One of them threw his legs out, got to his feet and spoke.

"We are sorry to see you here, sir," he said with the calm inflection of an English gentleman. "We too are masters of lost ships, as we presume you are, and prisoners. I am named Blake. Permit me to introduce you."



The German commander fired. The bullet grazed Captain Bill's head, but he caught the barrel of the pistol in his hand so that the second shot struck the steel roof.

And then, with a formality that under the circumstances seemed absurd, Captain Bill was duly made acquainted with five other "masters of lost ships," and asked to explain the events preceding his appearance in this sad colony. He learned that in nothing but details were their stories dissimilar. He was congratulated that he alone had been able to strike a punishing blow before losing the fight. He learned that here were five men who would

have willingly died could a valorous fight have culminated in assurance that another U-boat had been swept from the registers. They courteously offered him his choice of bunks, but he knew without their telling that of the six men in that cabin two must sleep on the floor, and refused.

Captain Main wondered mentally, in his calm, logical way, what these other masters, three of great steamers, would think if they knew him for what he was, ex-outlaw,

ex-gun-runner, ex-corsair so recently reformed; and then he thought, almost with a sense of superiority, that these men were soft compared with such as he, that these were gentlemen of the seas who had led what to him would have been tame and uneventful lives. None of them had ever had a price upon his head. None of them had ever before faced a gallows and a noose. These were men who had been welcomed in their ports. They had never slipped in, hoping to avoid observation and avert suspicion. They had returned from voyages eager to meet wives, children, friends, employers; whereas he had come alone—always alone from great adventures, with none to welcome.

"For some reason she doesn't seem to be making way."

The voice of the English gentleman, who had been master of a famous ship, aroused Bill from his meditation where he sat on the floor.

"How can Monsieur be certain of zat? But he should have ze know. He knows ze sub-boat. Ah, he ees ze only one who do know ze sub-boat and has been een one before," commented Captain Escouffaire, the master of a French mail-boat, in his painful English.

The Englishman gave them information, and Captain Bill gathered that he had been a commander of the British Naval Reserve, had been interested in the development of submarines and had, at his regular training intervals, done duty upon such craft. The conversation passed on in the fatigued monotone of men who are wearied fellow-prisoners; but Captain Bill's brows were scowling and his mind suddenly alert. The imagination that had made him a successful adventurer and had led him to escape from a thousand dangerous situations was at work. He was tabulating, correlating and fiercely scheming as he sat with his lean hips on the steel floor and his broad shoulders against the locked door.

The crew of a U-boat of this size could scarcely exceed twenty men, all told. Three of these were gone, and three wounded by his own shell-fire. That left fourteen. The prisoners were confined in what had probably been an engineer's cabin, amidships, as his observation of sea-abodes had subconsciously told him in that short passage to his prison. The commander's cabin was probably about twelve paces forward. The engine-room must be aft, as indicated by the subdued noises therefrom. The door against which he rested his back was of thin wood. He found himself reaching back and tapping and feeling it to assure himself of this fact. It opened outward, as all ships' doors of emergency character do. It was not barred—this much he had also observed. There was another man there in that cabin, Captain Olesen, who looked even stronger and physically more capable than he himself. Two men against that door should splinter it at the first impact. And then—

He stopped and derided himself. What could six men

experienced men would have left her captors as helpless as if they had never revolted to victory. This Englishman—

"Captain," he demanded, suddenly lifting his chin from his chest where it had rested during his reverie, "if you had command of this boat, could you teach the others of us to run her to port?"

His companions paused and gave heed with astonishment, although his voice had been nothing more than a hoarse murmur, as if coming from some vague depth which they had not surmised.

"Why—why, yes! By heavens, I could!" Blake replied in a tense voice scarcely louder.

Captain Bill straightened his legs, doubled them under him on his knees and then crawled into the center of the tiny space.

"There are six men here ready to die," Captain Bill said as if stating a fact. "There are six men here who probably will die if taken before German judges—die like criminals, not as sailors and brave and free men! Why not die here? Men, up above us at the top are two boats filled with friends of mine. Friends, I say! With a low glass, open boats and four hundred miles from land! You men know what it means. The one hit made off my boat smashed the for'ard gun of this craft and knocked out six of their men. I know, because that scut of a puppet in gold braid told me so when I was in his cabin. Maybe he has twelve or fourteen left. Maybe we can't smash the door and surprise them enough to get the best of it, but if you're with me, we can try. And as far as I'm concerned, I'd rather take the chance and die now than leave those men of mine behind."

He had to lift his hand in a motion of caution to silence them when the possibilities now open dawned upon them.

"You're right! You're right!" declared the English liner-man hoarsely. "If you put six of them out of action we've got a chance! The beast that runs this craft went one too far when he thought to bag enough of us to make a German holiday. He thought he could gain an iron cross by bringing in such proof of his work. He hasn't considered that there are now six of us, a wooden door, and at least one man in this hole that knows the mechanism of such boats. I suggest that you, Captain Main, be our leader, and that we try!"

They were inflamed by the daring of it, these men who had commanded others through stress and storm and now crowded together in the tiny space until their heads, some gray with the beginning of age, others untouched by time's erosion, were together as closely as conspirators ever were before. They took stock of knowledge and strength. Here were hardy men, and unafraid. Truly the German commander, seeking his bauble, had not measured the quantity and quality of menace (Continued on page 111)

do against at least a dozen and possibly fourteen? Unarmed men, fighting with naked hands against some at least with arms? And then he thought of MacHarg and Washington and Glover and Burns and those others who in the past had fought against far more desperate and hopeless odds, and fought to victory, too, and now he wished that five of them he might select were there with him. But, again, here were five men who were no more afraid to die than those adventurers he might have chosen. And one of them knew submarines! To capture her with in-



The captain of the gun wanted for no orders, but fired.

CROWNS of TIN

By JEANNE
JUDSON

Illustrated by
GRANT T.
REYNARD

A Résumé of the Opening Chapters

THEODORA MARCH had gone "on her own." The yeast of youth had sent her out of her little Northern Michigan home—had made her look with disfavor upon her long-known suitor Adam Crane and caused her to rebel against the commonplaces of her small-town life with her small-town family.

Her first flight took her on a visit to her maternal uncle Jim Straight—a strange man, who possessed some means but who lived the year round with his four grown sons in a hunting-lodge in the Sierra Nevadas. Straight made her welcome with some constraint, and she learned that she was the first woman who had entered his house since the death of his wife years before. One of the four boys—Joe, Jim Junior, Brampton and Larry—was not his son; but he had never told them which it was, had treated all alike, and had made each promise, after finishing college, to remain at the Lodge until thirty years old. Larry, who was a violinist of real power, fell in love with Theodora—Teddy, as she was called. And Teddy liked Larry; but her restlessness soon sent her on again—this time to San Francisco, though two of Straight's hunting-guests, theatrical men named Chase and Thurston, had advised New York and a dramatic school.

In San Francisco Teddy worked for a time as a waitress; then she earned notice and a hundred dollars by an exhibition swim around the dangerous Seal Rock. This performance attracted the notice of Bromley, a motion-picture producer, and he engaged her to do stunts of the sort.

Meanwhile the three younger Straight boys had demanded release from their promise to stay at the Lodge till they were thirty. Straight had acquiesced, but unwillingly.

"I'm going to free you," he said, "—let you go out to the life you choose, let you enter into rotten business and a rottener society, let you pursue whatever chimera of success or fame you desire, let you suffer as I have suffered.

"Go out—go out, I say. Win your tin crowns. But I warn you the time will come when you will be glad to come back here and rest."



IN this, the second installment of our serial by a new American novelist, the heroine goes to New York, the city of ambition's dreams. Just before she left San Francisco, an old actor advised her: "If you must spend money, spend it on clothes. No one in New York knows or cares where you eat or where you sleep, but they are sure to look over your clothes."

Thurston was immaculate, almost dapper in appearance, his thin face grave and quiet, his eyes glowing under the long, womanish lashes.

CHAPTER V

THERE is little doubt that with the innate impulse for melancholy which youth often feels, Teddy made as much, at least mentally, of her lonely position in life as possible. Larry had dropped out of her ken; she was sure that her mother did not love her as much as she did the prettier sisters. The sisters themselves were too busy with their love-affairs to think much about her, and her brothers were too careless to write, especially as she seemed to be making enough money to get on very well by herself. Their understanding and sympathy did not go farther than material needs. She liked to think of herself as a woman cut off from all the sweet and simple things of life, and devoting her entire thought to the furtherance of her ambitions. She grew

quite melancholy about it whenever she happened to be alone.

As a matter of fact, she was having the time of her life and would not have changed places with anyone in the world. She was doing things she loved; she was earning what seemed to her to be a lot of money; she was meeting new people and being admired; and if the people she met were not friends in the deeper meaning of the word, she was too young to feel any lack in their relationship. All she wanted was companionship, success and a good time.

Bromley was delighted with her work, for no matter what he asked her to do, she was always eager and enthusiastic. Her stunts were seldom really dangerous, though they looked so on the screen. After a few weeks, when a number of other companies offered her work, she began to realize just why he had been so anxious to make a year's contract with her. The only other "stunt-actor" on the Coast was a young Indian named White Eagle—a little man with a handsome face. She met him at the studio one day, and he explained to her his method of working. He had no contract with any of them, but went to all of them on call, charging for each stunt according to the time and danger or skill involved.

Bromley saw her talking to White Eagle on one of these idle days and realized the danger of such contact. Six months pass very quickly, and he had found Teddy even more useful than he had hoped; he wanted to keep her. So he went over and interrupted them.

"What's White Eagle doing?" he asked. "Trying to persuade you to join the *101 Ranch* or *Pawnee Bill* show?"

"Just the opposite! He's telling me how much more money he makes now than when he was with a wild West show, and he advises me never to accept a contract with any one company again," said Teddy mischievously.

"Don't believe all you hear, Teddy; that's all right for White Eagle, but you want to act some day, and you're getting your training right here."

"I'm not at all sure that I want to act some day—at least, in motion pictures."

"Good Lord, it's even worse than I thought! Some one has allowed the legitimate, high-art bug to bite you. I suppose you want to play Shakespeare."

"I didn't say I wanted to act at all, but you know as well as I do that these women aren't actresses—at least, that their art, if it is an art, isn't acting, any more than scenario-writing is literature. It isn't literature; it's steel-construction work, or carpentry with words, and the acting of scenarios is just like that. It's animated photography. They have to be artists of a kind to do it, but it isn't acting."

Bromley shook his head sadly, as much as to say that she was quite hopeless; and then, seeing that White Eagle still lingered near, he drew her aside to say in a confidential whisper:

"I want you to come to a party to-night—seven o'clock, at Lait's. Just a little celebration in honor of the completion of the filming of 'The Ghost of Golden Gulch.' You'll be there?"

TEDDY nodded, smiling. She had heard other members of the company say that an invitation to a party was Bromley's unfailing method of conciliating anyone who he feared was a bit dissatisfied with conditions in the Golden Gate Motion-picture Producing Company. The renewal of Teddy's contract was still some months away, however, and she was glad to go. The restaurant-life of cities was still new to her. She enjoyed the music and the lights; she loved to watch the women and their escorts, and she loved also to dance. In other words, she was young and healthy; and when one is young and healthy, one takes the good the gods provide, asking no questions about motives and thinking very little about how the bill

is to be paid. It is many years before most people discover that when the gods seem most generous, they are really most mercenary.

The party was not large. Bromley always made these parties small enough so that the people who were included would feel they had been especially honored. Mary McIntyre, the leading woman, was there, of course; Victor Powers, the leading man; Millicent Mainwaring, whose size was the exact opposite of the imposing proportions of her name; Millicent's husband, who was just that, except on the programs; and John Hartley, Teddy's one real friend in the company, who always told her that he "meant to be an actor," but since his wife's health had failed and she could no longer travel with him, he had gone into motion pictures.

Thornton Bromley never did things by halves. His dinners were always things worthy of anticipation, especially if one did not mind if the guests sometimes became a bit maudlin before the finish. Fundamentally, Teddy was an athlete, and she never forgot her training. She did not consciously refuse to drink beyond a certain limit, or watch her diet. Her own healthy, normal appetites held her to a moderation which nothing like moral scruples or fear of consequences could have accomplished; so it was that at eleven o'clock on the night of the party, when the gaiety of the others was beginning to become somewhat conspicuous, she was quite clear-headed, watching the show, as much absorbed as a child in a fairy tale.

Presently the professional dancers retired, and the orchestra began playing a fox trot. Thornton Bromley danced off with Mary McIntyre; he was proud of being "as young as ever." Victor Powers and Millicent Mainwaring followed them. Miss Mainwaring's husband made a half-hearted attempt to get Teddy to dance also, but she said she was tired; and so she and John Hartley and Miss Mainwaring's husband sat alone and silent. Miss Mainwaring's husband never said very much at any time, and Teddy did not try to draw him out. As for John Hartley, he had reached a stage of dignity too deep for mere words. Majestic, immaculate, courtly, he sat lost in memories of the days when he had thrilled audiences "from coast to coast," as a "heavy" in the "legit."

SO Teddy sat and watched undisturbed, marveling at the high color and Olympian proportions of the San Francisco women, many of whom met the eyes of their six-foot partners on an equal level—women who had grown up big and colorful like the fruits and flowers of their native State.

Then Teddy caught sight of Joe—not the grave, quiet Joe of the Lodge, but a gay, prancing, awkward, business-man-on-a-holiday Joe. She watched him eagerly and just restrained an impulse to call his name as he passed her. At last he sat down at a table very near her own, and with him was Jimmy. The two women at their table were not just the sort of girls Teddy would have expected them to choose even as companions for an evening at Lait's, but she was in no mood to criticize. Her one thought was that she wanted to attract their attention and talk with them. Her own party had returned to the table, but they did not observe her abstraction. Finally she succeeded in catching Joe's eye. A smile of welcome was on her lips, and she half rose from her chair in her eagerness.

Joe looked at her with a second's recognition in his eyes. Then his face sobered; his eyes grew cold and looked through her, and he turned away. Jimmy had seen her too, and she was sure that he was just about to speak when he saw Joe's face, and he too dropped his eyes and made no sign of recognition. For a moment she continued to stare at them, unable to believe her eyes. She saw Jimmy touch Joe's arm and whisper something—a remonstrance, she thought. Joe answered, and she could distinctly hear the words "too notorious."

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Finally she succeeded in catching Joe's eye. A smile of welcome was on her lips, and she half rose from her chair in her eagerness. Joe looked at her with a second's recognition in his eyes. Then his face sobered; his eyes grew cold, and he turned away. . . . She could distinctly hear the words "too notorious."

Luckily, none of the people at Teddy's table saw what had passed. She was alone with her misery. She did not even glance at that other table again, but she was conscious when they left the restaurant. "Too notorious!" The words which she had overheard would not leave her brain.

So that was what Joe thought! She contrasted her life of hard work with the probable lives of the two women who had been with her cousins. For the first time she appraised them harshly, and mentally placed them just where their appearance indicated that they belonged. They were not the sort she would have expected to see with Joe, not the sort she would care to see with one of her brothers; yet Joe appeared publicly with them and was afraid to recognize her. She did not have sufficient knowledge of men's ethics in regard to women to know that they always have a much higher standard for relatives, even cousins, than for the women whom they accept as companions for an idle hour.

Both her heart and her vanity had been wounded, and she did not know which wound was the deeper. Up to this time she had been rather proud of her work with the Golden Gate Motion-picture Producing Company. Now she began to doubt the standing of her position—for now she was constantly being reminded of it. The attitude of the other members of the company, certain things they said and did, unnoticed before, convinced her that she was regarded as belonging to a slightly lower class than the others, professionally. She was like a circus-performer, belonging to "the profession," but holding a lower position in it than did the regular actors.

In Teddy's sensitive state she exaggerated every word or look that could foster this belief. She began to avoid the others after working hours and to have big, half-formed dreams of future success. She would show them all that she had brains as well as muscles, a mind as well as a body. She would be an actress, a great actress—not an animated photographer's model, but an actress in the spoken drama. She confided this ambition to John Hartley one day.

"My contract with the Golden Gate people will be finished in another month," she said, "and I don't intend to renew it. I am going to New York and try for the real stage. Do you think I could act?"

"Acting doesn't count much in this day," said John Hartley, shaking his head sadly. "If you happen to be young and pretty, or chance to look like some manager's idea of a 'type,' they'll shoot you into a part even if you have just come from working in a restaurant, and pass by a dozen of the splendid women of the stage who have learned their art from beginning to end."

Teddy blushed consciously. What would he think, she wondered, if he knew of her own restaurant-experience in her first weeks in San Francisco?

"Take my wife, for example: I remember when she was playing *Camille*. You have probably heard of her *Camille*. Even Bernhardt could not surpass her." But then he remembered that Teddy had asked his advice.

"Before you go, I want to give you some

letters. I'll give you one to Dave Smith. He's the best agent I know, and in addition, if he thinks you show promise, he'll coach you in parts. He can teach you more in a month than you'd get in a dramatic school in a year, and his rates aren't high, considering. Besides, he's connected with Thurston, the producer, and if you can once get into one of his shows, your future is as assured as any future on the stage can be."

"Did you say Thurston?" asked Teddy.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"I think I've met him, but it may not be the same man."

"There's only one in the producing business. Looks like a pickled icicle, but has a dangerous way with the ladies."

"I guess that must be the same man," said Teddy, smiling.

"See here, little girl; I don't want to knock the profession. I've seen good times and bad in it, but I'm not as young as I used to be. I guess the assured pay-check looks better than fame to me these days; but just the same, you'd better think a bit before you pass up the movies. Thurston can help you if he wants to, but that kind of help isn't always safe to take, and if you stay on here, perhaps you can persuade Bromley to give you parts."

"I don't want parts in the movies. Besides, I'm tired of things here and want to go away. I can always come back if I fail."

That same day Teddy wrote a letter to Uncle Jim, telling him of her new plans. In it she also told of seeing the two boys, a thing about which she had at first intended remaining silent. He would be glad to know they were well, she thought, and she tried to make it clear that Joe either had not seen or had not recognized her. Jim Straight's reply showed that she had not deceived him.

"You must not feel hurt because Joe did not see you," he wrote. "He, like you, is pursuing his ambition. He desires to be a business man of eminent respectability and prosperity. It is probable that he also has social ambitions. Joe never makes compromises. He could have recognized you and avoided you later, but realizing that a cousin who did 'stunts' for the movies did not fit in with the career he has planned, he made his sacrifice at once without compromise. You must not think that it was not a sacrifice."

"You also are struggling to achieve something. As you progress toward your goal, you will have to make many sacrifices, and the things that you relinquish will perhaps be of greater worth than the thing for which you strive. It will not be until the crown of your desire is placed upon your head that you will know it for the worthless thing it is, and then realization will have come too late. It is only the failure who dies happy, for every success in the eyes of the world knows in his own heart that he is a failure—the crown with which the world has crowned him is made of tin, though it has been paid for



When he was not looking, she would rub those kisses off her lips.

with every precious thing that life has to offer." The letter frightened Teddy a little—not that she took what she called "Uncle Jim's ravings" seriously, but even while she laughed at him, there was in his letters, as in his speech, something impressive that made people listen and remember. He was like a great actor who can make the

lines in a cheap melodrama sound like those of a strong play. There was a note of pathos in the letter, too.

"I had hoped that you might come to spend Christmas with me," he wrote. She thought of him alone in the Lodge and wondered if he ever went into those faded, musty rooms upstairs, to read the dusty books of poetry or listen to the plaintive wailing of the rusty harp in the wind. As she thought of these things, she grew angry with the boys for having left him there alone. "They might have waited a few years longer," she thought. She was almost tempted to go to him herself, if only for a few weeks, but of

course that was impossible. There was no time to be wasted if she was to become a great actress.

It was surprising how little there was to be done, how few people to say good-by to, before she left San Francisco. John Hartley was the only one who seemed to be at all interested in her career or sorry to see her go. He gave her all sorts of fatherly advice; and what was more important, he gave her the letter to the agent, Dave Smith.

SO Teddy took the long trip back East—said good-by to San Francisco and traveled across the desolate Rockies and barren plains and into the familiar home country of green and yellow fields through the Middle West—on into the city which to so many people typifies either the land of achievement of youthful dreams or the land of all disillusionment—New York.

"You'd better go to the address I gave you on Forty-fifth Street," Hartley had told her. "It may look pretty cheap and sordid to you at first, but if you don't get an engagement for a long time, you'll be glad you went to a cheap place and saved your money."

So it was that Teddy looked out on the electric brilliance

of Broadway from the third floor of the dingiest, dustiest room she had ever seen, made dustier and dingier by memories of blue and gold San Francisco. There was gas instead of electricity, and a community bathtub on the floor below that almost reduced her to tears of vexation. The one advantage was that in a theatrical rooming-house no one rises early; and it was comparatively easy for Teddy to get there first. She was tempted to get a small apartment for herself, but she remembered John Hartley's warning.

"If you must spend money," he had said, "spend it on clothes. No one in New York knows

or cares where you eat or where you sleep, but they are sure to look over your clothes, and many a beginner gets a part ahead of an experienced actress just because she is better dressed."

For two weeks the only people to whom Teddy spoke were her landlady, a good-natured, shiftless Irishwoman who lived in the basement and only emerged when rents were due,—waiters in the restaurants where she ate, and Dave Smith, to whom she went every morning for instruction and who consistently refused to send her out after an engagement until "some of the rough edges were worn off."

Teddy had at first thought that she would look up Mr. Thurston and ask him to help her, but after two visits to the office of Dave Smith she decided that she would rather wait until she had obtained some sort of work and then look to him for advancement.



"Larry!" In a second she was on her feet and he was holding both her hands in his.

She had ceased to think of Thurston as a man; he was merely a stepping-stone, and as yet she was not ready to use him. Every morning she went to see Dave Smith, and every evening she pored over the parts he had given her, studying aloud to train her voice until she was sure of every tone. Her voice was the only thing about which Dave Smith had seemed at all enthusiastic. It was rather deep for a woman's voice, and it lacked the flat tone so common in the Middle West. Deep breathing had done for her speaking voice what voice culture accomplishes for singing voices, and physical exercise had made her sure of her body. She was naturally graceful, and Dave Smith was really more enthusiastic about her than he allowed her to guess.

In the afternoons Teddy permitted herself to be swept away by the spell of Fifth Avenue and the shops until she found that she was spending her savings rapidly and that unless she was ready for work soon, she would be as penniless presently as during those first weeks in San Francisco. With this thought in mind, she forced herself to remain in her room one afternoon and busied herself with pacing up and down, reading parts. A knock at the door interrupted her.

"Come in," she called.

The door opened a narrow space, and a tousled, curly gray head was inserted, followed by a fraction of soiled pink dressing-gown.

"Oh, you're alone!" there was both surprise and relief in the voice. She was a small woman, with a young-old figure. Her eyes were round and bright, with heavy, high-arched brows. Her face was deeply lined, but sparkling with animation, a sort of perpetual youth of the soul shining through.

"I thought I heard you talking to some one," she said, still standing in the doorway.

"No, just studying parts; wont you come in?" said Teddy.

"Of course—how stupid of me! I might have known that was what you were doing. We live in the room next door. I've broken a finger-nail and can't find my file. I wondered if you would lend me yours."

"Certainly—use anything you want," said Teddy, motioning toward the dressing-table with the cracked glass. She was rather glad to be interrupted and to have some one to talk with.

"YOU'VE got an engagement, then?" said her visitor, seating herself in the one comfortable chair and starting in to manœuvre her heavily ringed old hands.

"No; I haven't. I'm just keeping in practice," said Teddy, thinking it as well not to tell how little experience she had.

"You'll get one, all right. You're young, and that's all that's necessary now. Look at me! We've been here three months and haven't succeeded in getting even a week's work. We wasted six weeks rehearsing for a show, and it only lasted one night. But that's what you've got to expect in the profession in these times. If I don't get an engagement before the end of this month, I'm going home, and thank God I've got one. We've got a farm in Connecticut, and I told George when we came to New York this season that it would be my last."

"You and your husband travel together?" asked Teddy, surmising that George must be a husband.

"Whenever we can. We've been more fortunate than most. You must have heard of me—Delancey Cameron."

"I suppose so. I haven't been working long, and one forgets names so easily."

"My husband is George Cameron. We had a sketch in vaudeville for three years—Delancey and Cameron. You must have seen it. But I like the legitimate better. There's no limit to what I could have done if I had only been three inches taller."

She had put the nail-file back on the dressing-table and was now using the buffer with an energy that was putting a shine of surprising brilliance on her pointed finger-nail.

"There, that's George's step on the stairs now. You must meet him later. He's a perfect dear. Has his family of course, like all men, but he's a gentleman on and off, and we haven't had a cross word in thirty years."

AFTER that, Mrs. Cameron came in almost every day and as a natural course of events Teddy told her the truth about her brief experience in the movies and of her coming to New York to go on the speaking stage. Every day Delancey Cameron grew more and more despondent. George would probably get an engagement. It was easier for men. But for her it was not so easy. There were many parts for old women, and of these she was too slow to play the impressive dowager rôles. Teddy discovered in her the sort of pessimism which she later learned is characteristic of all actors or actresses out of work—the moment an engagement is gained, all is rosy again, and the stage is the greatest profession in the world.

"Any good news, dear?" she would ask each day, and Teddy would tell her that while Dave Smith was at last sending her to the managers for parts, she had thus far not even succeeded in getting a rehearsal. There seemed to be so many people for every part, and the managers always preferred to engage some one who had had more experience.

Teddy had ceased to ask Delancey Cameron about her success. The tragedy in the vivacious old lady's eyes was too painful a thing to look upon. One day, however, she came tripping into Teddy's room without even knocking.

"I've got work for you, dearie," she announced, "that is, if you want it," she added as Teddy stared at her silently.

"What is it? Who with? Where?" asked Teddy, waking up to the significance of her words.

"With Delancey and Cameron, right here in New York. You see, it's a tabloid drama for vaudeville. Of course, you can't be sure of anything, but it looks awfully good. At least twelve weeks here in New York—that is, New York, Brooklyn and Jersey—and then on the road. Four parts—George, myself, Rupert Norworth and an ingénue. I thought of you for the ingénue. It's Norworth's show, and he's promised to give you a try-out—to-morrow morning at ten o'clock."

"You are awfully good, Mrs. Cameron. I don't know how to thank you. It's wonderful to get an engagement like this without even going after it."

"Nonsense, child; I haven't done anything. I like you and a really great artist can afford to be thoughtful of beginners. It's only the little people that are afraid to do some one else a good turn."

Teddy never did discover whether or not there was anything in the past of Delancey Cameron to justify her firmly fixed belief that she was a great actress, and that only the fact that she had traveled with her husband—and had remained virtuous in the face of a solid phalanx of managers and producers who were clamoring to put her name in electric lights on Broadway, if she would only "pay the price"—had kept her from ranking with the greatest names of the stage. Teddy did discover, however, that this belief was as firmly fixed in the minds of innumerable other actresses who had passed middle age without attaining the goal of their ambitions.

There was no difficulty in getting the engagement when Teddy went with her two friends on the following morning to see Rupert Norworth, who was to play opposite her and who was both author and producer of the sketch.

When Teddy told Dave Smith, he did not seem to be overenthusiastic.

"It'll do for a start," he said, (Continued on page 10)

A desperate man must take no chances. Rawhide Pete, son of a wolf and a side-winder rattlesnake, was that man.

Rawhide Pete, ring-tailed, two-gun terror of the Southwest, comes back like Rip Van Winkle, and his home-coming is tempestuous



The BAD MAN

By EDWIN
L. SABIN

Illustrated by
QUIN HALL

"Oh, I wears 'em in front, an' I wears 'em tied,
An' I wears 'em the same on either side;
Fer I'm slow on the tell, but I'm quick on the draw,
An' Colonel Colt is my only law!
Whoop!"

IN husky voice thus gayly warbled to the Arizona stars Rawhide Pete, as by a burro-trail he crossed the Chiquito Flat on the final leg of his trip in from exile. And he meant it all; for although the night air was sharp, a certain inward heat of purpose set him exhilaratingly aglow, while the worn scabbards of his two good guns warmed the leather of his flanks.

Fifteen years—lean, skulking years—had he existed like a greaser, canned in the dirty little hamlet of Placita, below the border—he, the ring-tailed, two-gun terror of the Southwest. Now he had decided to pull his freight, revisit, reclaim and revenge.

The years had not much have changed Big Butch—that traitor in the last episode which had netted only one hawss, and flight. They could not much have changed old Arizona. But they had given Pete black whiskers, Mexican Don type, snags yellowed by constant corn-husk smoking, and a fierce appetite for gore.

The northward route was easy—ride by night, hide by day. What price was on his head now he did not know, but a desperate man must take no undue chances. Rawhide Pete, son of a wolf and a side-winder rattlesnake, was that man.

He ventured scarcely to wash the alkali from his gutlet by the accustomed methods. He steered shy of the main-traveled trails, which had broadened and increased in number. And on those occasions when he briefly pursued a highway, he was several times startled by the onrush through the night of roaring headlights that sent his mount careening into the brush and the curses storming into his throat. They must be the same portents that left those long spurts of yellow dust, viewed afar in the daytime. The word dawned upon him.

"Auty-mo-biles, hey? Caramba! In Arizony, drat 'em!"

The knowledge "chawed" at him. Effete civilization, this! Why any man who could fork a hawss should choose a bellowing, four-wheeled engine was more than Pete might fathom. As is to be conjectured, Rawhide Pete was a back-number; for not yet had Madero, Huerta and such magnates convinced this rural Mexico of shiny up-

holstered six-cylinders; and in the Placita region a *caballero* was still a *caballero*, and a peon was still a burro-driver. The only six-cylinders with which Pete was acquainted hung at his thighs.

Crook's Hollow at last, by Gawd! There she sat, the same sun-baked collection of adobe and brush *ramadas*—grewed a trifle, o' course, but not much. From his eyrie under the cedar on the hot hill, Pete surveyed her, two miles yonder, at the crossroads of the flat; he peered hungrily for the location of the Cheer Up saloon, and made it out. In his mind's eye he saw the worn hitching-rail in front, where the dusty cow-punchers, lithely dismounting, tossed their reins; with his mind's eye he followed them inside the 'dobe walls, where they lined against the bar, clumped from bar to tables and shuffled the soiled cards. He saw Butch, the hound (that traitorous pal!). He pictured himself striding in, unknown, presently paralyzing the crowd, and with both guns briskly barking,—while the bartender groveled behind the counter, and Butch, neatly earmarked, sprawled under a table, and the room rang inchoate,—dousing the lights and backing to the door, to vault aboard his waiting steed and race for the Horsethief Trail and his snug sanctuary of Cochise's Hole.

Ha! ha! Rawhide Pete had come back! The newspapers would announce the prodigy, and the frontier would stampede for shelter.

Pete withdrew from sight and "laid out" comfortably until after sunset. Duly restored to his pristine vigor and old-time ferocity, he saw to it that his twin six-cylinders twirled smoothly on their axes, cinched his center-fire saddle a notch tighter, limbered his thumbs, made certain that the thongs binding the gun-triggers back against the guards were firm, rolled the weapons a few times in further menacing preliminary; then he spat, scowled, lighted a fresh cigarette and leisurely rode down, to arrive about nine o'clock.

Bueno!

The lights of Crook's Hollow winked at him, approaching by the trail. The one main street was illumined as if for a fiesta, but was appropriately deserted at this hour when the male population, with their guests, should be engaged in irrigating and sportive play at the Cheer Up. No! Hanged if there wasn't one of those newfangled buzz-wagons scooting round the corner; three more were hitched in front of a bright sign reading "Paradise Theater,

10 cents,"—and a couple actually blockaded the Cheer Up rail! Didn't scurrcly leave hawss-room! No gentleman would stand for that; it demanded blood.

With difficulty Rawhide Pete looped the reins of his restive animal over the end of the hitching-rail.

"Stay there, you son of a gun," he warned gruffly. He paused a moment to twitch his holsters, tied at the bottom, a little more to the front; he loosened the long revolvers in their scabbards, pulled down his hat, spat out his cigarette-butt, drew a full breath and with two long strides pushing through the swinging doors, entered.

Ha! Patronage was good, this night, as usual—voices buzzing, chips clicking, lips smacking. He darted swift glances right and left, and two more scuffling strides carried him to the door end of the bar, whence, half turned, he might face the groups without imperiling his rear.

Ha! He was being observed, but not recognized. Some of the low chatter had died; eyes were scanning him.

The bar was a new polished bar, and a new brass foot-rail invited the sole of his boot.

"Likker-r-r," growled Rawhide Pete over his shoulder to the attentive bartender, whose shirt-sleeves were suspiciously white.

"Yessir. What'll it be, sir?" The bartender's query was flatteringly obsequious.

"Gimme an Arizony liver-tickler," rasped Rawhide, conscious of his attitude, his sagging belt, his two guns hanging low on the front of his chaps, his planted foot and his slouched black hat. "An' be mighty quick, young feller. I'm so dry I can hang myself with my spit."

But a figure had advanced from among the tables and was inter-

rupting. "Wait a minute. The gentleman will drink with me."

Rawhide glared upon him. He was a small man in knee pants and gray flannel shirt with standing collar; and he was topped by a visored baggy cloth cap crowned with a button. Tenderfoot from the States, b' gosh—a plumb pilgrim! *Caramba!* Had it come to this, in Arizona, when a gent couldn't likker in peace? So Rawhide glared upon him.

"The devil you say!" His hand was ready to his gun.

"No offense," said the obnoxious stranger. "No offense intended. But I'm a little dry myself, and I'd like to make your acquaintance, Mr.—er— My name's Marston, Mr.— What'll you have?"

"Gimme an Arizony liver-tickler, I say, an' mighty pronto," thundered Rawhide. "Half rattlesnake-pizen an' half t'rant'lar-juice, with a 'Pache screech for a chaser!"

The vernacular rose readily to his lips. He slammed the counter, and the glasses jingled. Conversation had fittingly ceased throughout the room. All faces were gravely turned upon him.

"The same for me," directed the obnoxious stranger, "and for this other gentleman here," he added. A companion—a slim, sharp-featured man in correct Stetson, neckerchief and puttees—had strolled forward to join him, and now smiled amiably upon Rawhide.

"Yessir; got it already mixed," asserted the bartender, hustling.

Rawhide glared about impatiently, challenging the first overt move. Said the one stranger, in an undertone to the other:

"He'll do. Gad, what a find!"

Replied the other:

"Great!"

They appeared to be appraising him critically. To be judged like a hawss was irritating. The bartender had planted a bottle and glasses. Scarcely looking, Rawhide located the bottle and a glass; with his right hand (his left prepared to draw) he poured four fingers until the glass slopped over, and mechanically swept the bottle along. He clutched his glass.

The one stranger, and then the other, tilted the bottle delicately, to the outflow of a scant quarter-inch.

"Let me introduce my friend Mr. Adams," proposed the first.

"What name?" invited the second stranger, alertly extending his hand.

Had it come also to this, in Arizona, that one gentleman asked another gentleman his *name*? Wow! Rawhide ignored the hand, and breathed with nostrils inflated.

"Suppose we sit down and talk a bit," hastily proffered the first stranger.

The overt act had been committed. At one gulp Rawhide drained his four fingers; he flipped the emptied glass against the ceiling, and before it had rained down in fragments, up to the level had leaped his two guns, his thumbs on the hammers.

"Whoopie!" he bawled, his gun-barrels (seven-inch, they) flickering right and left. "Who tells me to set?" The bartender had disappeared. Chairs were being capized by certain abrupt movements of the former occupants. "This aint my night for settin'. I'm on the prod. 'Cause why? 'Cause my name's

Rawhide Pete, I'm full o' t'rant'lar-juice, an' I'm bad. Whar's Big Butch? Somebody show me Big Butch. Whoopie! Whar's the lyin' cross 'twixt a skunk an' a coyote who throwed dirt in the face of a respectable citizen like Rawhide Pete an' put the law ag'in' him? Spiled his young life, by gum! Show him to me, somebody. I'm hyar to stretch his hide for whang-leather. Whoopie! Don't stir, nobody. Listen to me howl. Fust time I've howled in fifteen year. Whoopie! My tail's a-rollin'. I was born with teeth an' two guns, an' was riz on raw meat an' blood. I bit on nails. I'm so mean I hate myself; alluz been that way. but I'm gettin' wuss."

"Wait a minute. Are those guns loaded?" interrupted again the first stranger. He was standing there—they both were standing there—suitably transfixed, and evidently impressed.

"How?" blared Rawhide, for the moment aghast at such tenderfoot temerity.

"You handle them well," rapidly pursued the stranger. "It's the real thing, eh? I've a proposition to make to you. Wait a minute—"



"Gimme an Arizony liver-tickler," thundered Rawhide. "Half rattlesnake-pizen an' half t'rant'lar-juice, with a 'Pache screech for a chaser!"

QUICK HALL

Bang! Rawhide neatly clipped the button from the top of the saggy cap. The wearer ducked. Bang! The other gun bored a splintery hole between his feet.

Bang! Bang! "Whoopie!" Rawhide was working both forty-fives, shuttling like a pair of pistons. A glass at the far end of the counter shivered into nothing; a bottle on a vacated table burst, pulverized. Bang! Bang! Bang! Blue haze filled the room. The mirror rang. Rawhide howled. He was backing to the door. There were no lamps, but a domed light was set in the ceiling. Bang! It was out, with a distinct pop—and so was he, with a triumphant whoop, leaving the room in semidarkness. Bang! That disposed of the light above the door; and yodeling wolfishly, Pete ran across the sidewalk for his horse.

A voice followed him, persistent, even hortatory. "Wait a minute! Hey! Wait a minute!"

It was the pesky tenderfoot, still. What the— Hadn't got enough yet, had he? Wow! But Rawhide did not wait. Whoopie! He twitched the lines free, vaulted into the saddle, hauled hard and was away, clattering down the street.

Bang! Bang! He emptied his guns into the stars, briefly dropped his lines upon his horse's neck while he reloaded, tucked the guns back into their scabbards, and now in safety on the open way pulled his mount to an easier lope. Wow! He'd showed 'em. He'd waked Arizona up. Now they knowed Rawhide Pete had come, an' come a-shootin'. He hadn't got Big Butch, but he was puttin' the fear o' man into his black heart. Whoop! Wow! This was the life. Not for years had Rawhide Pete so felt big Injun. The kick of his guns and of the four-finger slug stimulated him pleasantly.

What next? Well, ten miles yonder to the Horsethief Trail; he remembered every inch of it, and by it he'd cross to Cochise's Hole and hide out there where all the sheriffs in Hades couldn't find him.

At lope and trot he jogged grimly along, with ear cocked for suspicious sounds behind; and presently, rearward, welled a suspicious sound indeed—not the drum of hoofs, but a sort of deep drone. He glimpsed a light-flash, distant like a low planet.

What? My Gawd! Did that mean they were chasin' him with one o' them auty-mo-biles? Chasin' him, a good man on a good hawss, right here in Arizona! Thinkin' to ketch him—him, Rawhide Pete, forkin' a hawss that he'd picked out hisself! My Gawd! Of all the low-down fool ideas!

Rawhide laughed shortly, gathered the reins, pressed with the spurs and opened up a trifle. His horse sprang forward obedient; thudity-thud, thudity-thud—the dim road reeled under; the dim brush reeled by.

Ur-r-r-r-r! Gosh, they were a-comin'! Yes suh—right a-comin'! Whoopie! Dios y Libertad! "Gwan, you!" bade Rawhide; he clapped in his spurs and was off in earnest. His horse lengthened stride, stretched neck, lowered belly and moved. Thudity-thudity-thudity vol-

flattened as he sat his vibrant rocking-chair, and his eyes watered, lashed by the shrewd air.

Ur-r-r-r-r-r! The drone had increased to a reverberant roar. A shaft of white light instantaneously broke past Pete and streamed on beyond, eerily dancing over ribbon of road and greasewood borders. He glanced alarmedly behind, and was dazzled. The light held him pinioned, although his horse was doing its best. If he might only reach that Horsethief Trail! Ur-r-r-r-r-r, bellowed the monster. Lord, if he could get out o' that light, before he was potted! Listen, now! S-q-u-a-a-a-a-w-k! What the devil! S-q-u-a-a-a-a-w-k! it signaled. Again he glanced rearward. Holy Heck, there was two of 'em—no, by ginger, three! Chasin' him? Ketchin' him! They were eatin' him up! The fust one—S-q-u-a-a-a-a-w-k! S-q-u-a-a-a-a-a-w-k!

For an instant Rawhide's heart fluttered helplessly; but he was a desperate man, riding for his life. The road turned; the stabbing light momentarily missed him; and he seized the opportunity, whirled his horse aside on two legs and tore into the brush. The closely pressing monster roared by in an eddy of dust, but the shifting light of the second machine swung on him as he floundered madly for darkness—lingered, settled, and bellowing, crashing, squawking, darned if the critter itself wasn't making for him like a mad bull, through brush and all!

The third machine was coming, similar—fust machine had wheeled an' was a-comin' too. All the brush was flooded with light—and he in the middle, on that

hawss! Called that fair play, did they? Called that a man-hunt in Arizona, did they? Hadn't nowhar to ride—couldn't see to shoot—felt like a hooked fish. Why didn't they shoot, themselves? Reckoned on takin' him alive, mebbe. But he was a desperate man; he— And at that moment, while Rawhide was hammering, spurring, vainly urging a bewildered mount, down plunged the same, foot in a badger-hole, like as not; and diving with added impetus Rawhide saw, not those flaring planets, but a perfect rain of stars.

He'd lost the reins; he staggered to his feet and lurched for flight—tripped, fell asprawl, staggered up again. No use! So he whipped out his guns and faced the half-circle. Rawhide Pete was at bay, and badly rattled.

"Hey, you! Hey! Hey! Wait a minute!" It was a familiar voice; a familiar figure wearing a ragged-topped cloth cap was advancing boldly through the brightness, where the brush grew waist-high.

"What yuh want?" growled Rawhide. "Stand back, by thunder. I'm a disp'rate man. I surrender, but I aint to be hounded by no auty-mo-biles. If you-all got me kivered, I surrender, but I done tol' yuh—"

"Aw, cut that out!" retorted Ragged Cap. "Here, here! Wait a minute. We aren't going to harm you. I'll stand the little damage at the Cheer Up, if you'll listen to reason. Want to make you a proposition."

"What's yore proposition?" warily demanded Rawhide.

"Put down your guns. This is the only cap I've got. Put down the one on my side, anyhow. There. Let's talk



"Buckets o' blood!" roared 'Rawhide, clapping palms to guns. "Draw, you son of a snake!"

business. What's your name, you say?"

"I'm Rawhide Pete. When I'm on the warpath, I'm the Arizony Grizzly from the head o' Salt River. But I know when I'm kivvered."

"Yes, yes, Rawhide. That's great stuff," approved the man. The second man—his friend in the leather calves—had unobtrusively joined him. "Do you always talk that way?"

"I do—"

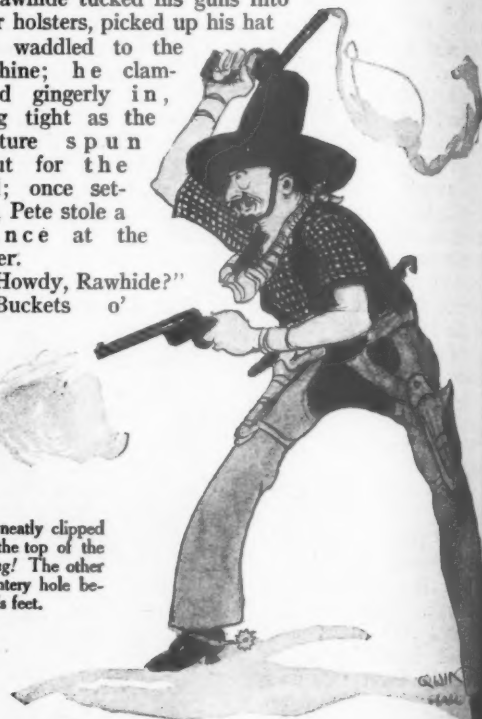
Rawhide tucked his guns into their holsters, picked up his hat and waddled to the machine; he clambered gingerly in, hung tight as the creature spun about for the road; once settled, Pete stole a glance at the driver.

"Howdy, Rawhide?"

"Buckets o'



Bang! Rawhide neatly clipped the button from the top of the saggy cap. Bang! The other gun bored a splintery hole between his feet.



'cept occasional I raise the ante a few."

"That's simply great."

"Great!" echoed the other.

"Do you always dress this way?"

"I wears 'em tied, an' I wears 'em low," declared Rawhide.

"Gad, what a find!" remarked the one stranger to the other.

"You did some beautiful shooting," he continued. "Say, can you roll a gun?"

"I kin. I kin roll 'em single or double."

"Can you fan a gun?" queried the other stranger eagerly.

"I kin," modestly asserted Rawhide.

"Tell you what, then," briskly pursued the first stranger: "I'll give you a hundred dollars a week on a year's contract to do business of bad man in front of the camera."

"Eh?" blurted Rawhide.

"Moving-picture stunts—see? Cleaning out gambling joints, holding up stages, rescuing women, fancy shooting, all that sort of thing."

"I kin stay onpacified, kin I?" asked Rawhide.

"Got to. The meaner you are, the more pay you draw. I'm after a real, genuine, two-gun bad man—been searching the country over for him."

"Wal, stranger," drawled Rawhide, "I don't ecksactly savvy the size o' noose you throw, but for a hundred pesos a week I'd try to sculpt my mother-in-law." And then: "How about that thar hawss?" he prompted. "You've lamed a good hawss on me. Why didn't you make yore proposition afore?"

"I would have, but you didn't give me time. I told you to wait a minute, didn't I? And then I had to take after you. Horse? Of course you may need a horse for screen-work, in Wild West business; but aside from that, forget it. Climb into that automobile yonder. Somebody'll lead the horse. He'll do for property."



blood!" roared Rawhide, clapping palms to guns.

"Big Butch! I know ye! Draw, you son of a snake!"

"Aw, close your cut-out. Throttle down," scoffed Big Butch. "There's a speed-limit law on since you bust south."

"What you mean?" demanded Rawhide, cautious for the next movement. "Keep yore hands in sight—but what you mean?"

"Shore I keep 'em in sight. This old boat's got a drag on its wheel like a flat tire, an' I'm paid a hundred bucks a month to hold her in the road."

"Aint you forkin' hawsses no more for the Tin Cup outfit, Butch?" asked Rawhide, awed.

"Me? Naw, I should say not! I'm drivin' for the Paradise Movin' Pictur outfit. I aint no puncher; I'm a shoffer. Oncet in a while I get on the screen—but get Rawhide, you're in luck. You start in as a star. Seems like virtue don't get no reward, nobow."

"Was you a-chasin' me?" challenged Rawhide, stung afresh. "Say!"

"Naw, I wasn't chasin' you; I was passin' you at fifty mile an hour! What was you tryin' to pull off, feller? You're in Arizony."

"By heck, if I could've struck the Hawssthief Trail fust, I'd 'a' showed ye," threatened Rawhide.

Big Butch jeered high.

"You're plumb loco, feller. Where you been, an' where d'yuh think you are? There aint no Hawssthief Trail. That's a scenic boobyvard, nowadays—paved clean over, twenty foot wide an' never hittin' more'n six per cent. Hawssthief Trail! My Gawd! I'll take you on it sometime, when you've learned to hol' yore hat on."

"My Gawd!" echoed Rawhide. And he inquired, with becoming humility: "Aint there any call for a hawss, any more?"

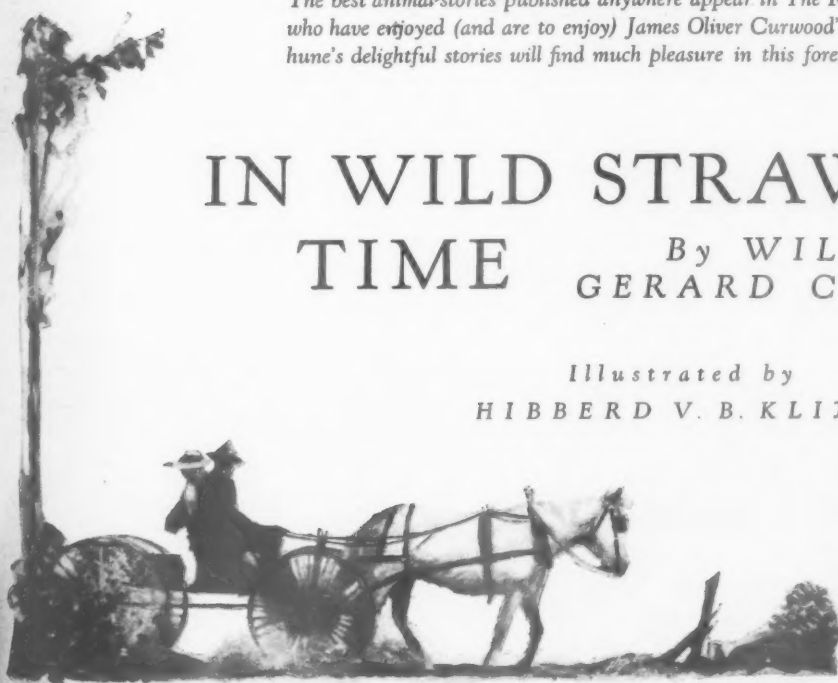
"Shore," cheerfully informed Butch. "On the screen. Allee same two-gun man."

The best animal-stories published anywhere appear in *The Red Book Magazine*. You who have enjoyed (and are to enjoy) James Oliver Curwood's and Albert Payson Terhune's delightful stories will find much pleasure in this forest idyl by Mr. Chapman.

IN WILD STRAWBERRY TIME

By WILLIAM
GERARD CHAPMAN

Illustrated by
HIBBERD V. B. KLINE



When the roots palled, she accepted the hint, and the two moved off toward the stream. Here the old bear sniffed along the water's edge, seeking any disabled fish that might have been cast up, and rooting among the stones in

THE early-morning light washed in a gray wave over the dark-green crest of the spruce-forest, and shortly the valley was suffused with shimmering gold as the sun's first beams fell upon the mist-curtain that overhung the low-lying ground. Each tiny atom of moisture among the millions in the dew-laden atmosphere reflected the golden tint radiantly, then slowly dimmed and was absorbed by the new warmth that came creeping into the air. As the last curling wisps of vapor dissolved, the sunlight swept over the wild meadow, disclosing its rich enameling of wild-flowers and lush green grass. Where the earth dipped slightly to hold the seeping water of a turbulent stream that flowed near by, a shallow mere fringed with purple-glowing flag was the last to yield its dew coverlet to the spreading rays.

Emerging from the black wall of trees that rimmed this quiet glade, a she bear with a single cub at her side cast appraising eyes over the sparkling expanse. Halting for a moment at the meadow's edge, she sniffed the air inquiringly, then shambled through the wet grass to drink at the pool. The cub's tiny bright eyes snapped with mischievous interest in each object that met his view. He suppressed his exuberance, however, for already he knew that quietness and caution were advisable in the open spaces until they were examined thoroughly for possible lurking dangers.

The mother-bear drank of the clear, cool water, and with her morning thirst satisfied, quested the meadow for breakfast. The cub was in the kindergarten stage of schooling, and was learning to supplement the lessening maternal supply of nourishment with more solid food. With twinkling baby eyes he watched his mother as she sought the roots of Indian turnip and prairie crocus and plowed them up with her snout. The cub sampled them and found the crocus-roots eatable, but the pungency of the Indian turnip was rather too biting for his sensitive throat. Anyway, he had breakfasted on more familiar food back in the warm den under an overhanging rock in the heart of the forest, and was not very hungry; and after gratifying a merely curious interest in the provender which his mother found so appetizing, he nuzzled her furry black flank impatiently.

the shallows for tadpoles. A scurrying crawfish she hooked up with her claws and drew to the bank for her offspring's edification, watching him with shrewd eyes as he cautiously moved it about with his paw and smelled the strange-appearing thing suspiciously. A nip on his tender muzzle from the tiny pincers sent him back on his haunches with a whimper of astonishment; and the mother, apparently satisfied with this first lesson in the habits of crawfish, crushed it beneath her foot and swallowed the tidbit with smacking satisfaction.

The stream yielded very little food this morning, and her hearty appetite impelled her to seek a more bountiful repast. Giving the cub a low, guttural command to follow, she started off across the meadow and into the woods, heading for a chain of burned-over hills that lay to the east. On the other side of this low range she knew of certain unused pasture-lands where grew a fruit much to her liking.

A part of the way was rough, but soon they passed the crest of the rise, scrambled down the slope and gained the open ground below. This was a stretch of stump-land pasture where a settler had once grazed his meager flocks, but it had long been deserted.

As the two descended to the open, an enticing fragrance in the air caused the older bear to sniff hungrily and shuffle along at a faster gait. The pleasing aromatic quality that reached her nose arose from a low, dense growth that matted the ground—a carpet of wild strawberries, the tiny deep-red fruit glowing brilliantly among the half-shielding green leaves. The older bear fell to the banquet ravenously.

The cub watched with interested eyes, sniffed the berries and at last tentatively mouthed them. His sharp little teeth pierced the delicate pulp; he licked the sweet juice from his lips and found it distinctly pleasing.

He ate until he could hold no more, his skin stretched so tight with his first meal of strawberries that he could scarcely waddle along after his more capacious mother. Finally even her enormous appetite was glutted, and she sought a warm, grassy pocket between the roots of a large stump and curled up to bask in the sun. The cub sprawled beside her, his little paunch ludicrously distended.

When he had rested long enough to feel the need of renewed activity, his playful sallies ended his mother's sleepy comfort, and she rose and sauntered off toward the deserted buildings, the cub following in her footsteps.

No trace of human odor lay around the little abandoned farmstead. With all a bear's overweening curiosity she nosed about the cabin and sheds expectant of something edible; but nothing rewarded her keen nostrils save the medley of scents left by the porcupines and mice and squirrels that for years had made the place a rendezvous. A red squirrel discovered her presence from his perch on the ridge-pole of the cabin and ran up and down the moss-grown "scoop" roof chattering wrathful insults at the intruders. The bear eyed him maliciously for a moment, then ignored the insolent little blackguard and continued her explorations.

The cub at first kept close to his mother's side, ill at ease in these strange surroundings. But gradually youthful curiosity overcame his timidity, and he strayed from the protecting presence to do a little investigating on his own account. While he sought to fathom the mystery of some rotting timbers overgrown with weeds that lay in the rear of the cabin, the old bear pursued her vague quest around the outbuildings.

A sudden muffled squalling brought her racing toward the sound, fur bristling along her back and eyes snapping with angry apprehension. The cry was plainly for help, and she was ready to battle any living thing that threatened her offspring. But no marauder was in sight; nor was the cub either, for that matter, though the plaintive squeals still filled the air, sounding strangely unreal but unmistakably his and quite near to her. Puzzled and anxious, she sought out his tracks with her nose, but these were so crisscrossed that they only confused her. Her rangings gradually drew the distracted mother closer to the outcry, and at last she knew that it arose from the clump of weeds. Picking her way over the crumbling wood at their roots, she came upon a yawning black hole from whence the pitiful summons issued.

The cub had tumbled into an old well, the wooden curb of which lay in decay about its mouth, overgrown with a screening mass of green. Fortunately it was dry, and so matted at the bottom with litter that the force of his fall had been broken; the fat little body had suffered nothing worse than a severe shaking-up. Terror-stricken with the sudden plunge and the quick-enveloping blackness, he squalled miserably for his mother.

Soon he heard her questioning calls and saw the silhouette of her head against the disk of blue light above him. But her arrival brought only the comfort of her presence; she was impotent to rescue him.

With yearning eyes the mother-bear circled the opening, crouching at the brink now and again to look down into the dark hole, whining anxiously and bidding him with low rumblings to try to climb up. The cub whimpered in reply and strove vainly to find footing up the straight walls. At first she could not discern the small black-furred form in the denser blackness of the bottom, but as her ceaseless trampling about the edge broke down the weeds, the light filtered in and made it possible for her to distinguish him. She flattened herself on the ground beside the well and stretched down first one forepaw and then the other in a fruitless attempt to reach the imploring little cap-

once she tentatively backed to the verge to essay a descent by the usual bear method. But the crumbling of the earth as she

sought for a foothold with her hind feet discouraged her, and she renewed her circling and impotent whining.

Suddenly she lifted her head to a new and startling sound. It was the beat of quick footfalls that came to her ears, and as they drew closer, she growled menacingly and bared her teeth in sullen defiance. Whatever it might be, it was advancing upon the cabin from the pasture, and dimly she associated the intruder with her cub's imprisonment in the pitfall. This of a certainty was the author of his mishap, and all her dormant ferocity blazed into being as she lurched forward to give battle to the unknown enemy before it could complete its designs. It was coming rapidly nearer, and she rushed to the front of the cabin to intercept it. As the enraged mother-bear rounded the building, a flying form darted inside before she could strike it down, and the door crashed shut against her snarling, savagely grinning face.

The following instant, to her angry amazement, she was assailed from behind by a screeching fury of teeth and claws. Immediately she found herself engaged in a battle to the death with a second enemy of whose approach she had received no warning.

A LITTLE earlier this same day an old buckboard holding two people deeply interested in each other crept over a seldom-traveled backwoods road that skirted the eastern edge of the abandoned farm. The slender, pretty girl beside the sturdy young driver looked up into his eyes shyly as he told her of his plans for the future.

Jeff had jumped at the hint dropped by the girl's mother that Sally was to return home that day from her spell of nursing old Mis' Hammersmith over at Big Forks; and he had volunteered to go and fetch her. For many months Jeff Tucker had held certain well-defined ideas which he had not yet come to in his telling of his large plans to Sally. But perhaps Sally Ingalls was not as unaware of what they might be as he imagined. Jeff's eyes said much that his tongue found it difficult to frame. Now he was leading up to the most important phase of his dreams.

An unclouded summer sun distilled from the red-fruited choke-cherry thickets and massed blooms of brier-rose and wild raspberry that lined the rutted tracks, an essence that the light breezes dissolved into an unmatchable fragrance. And young blood was responding to the urge of the perfumed air, vibrant with the notes of song-sparrows and yellow-hammers that alighted on swaying milkweed stalks, then rose and alighted again farther on as the buckboard with its absorbed occupants pursued them slowly along the winding road.

But the ancient vehicle was traitor to the lover's cause. As it rolled over a "thank-you-ma'am" on the down-grade of a hill, the forward axle snapped and broke—and so did the thread of the young man's discourse. At the sudden lurch Jeff threw his arm around Sally's waist to prevent her falling forward upon the horse, which stopped in its tracks as the whiffletree came down about its heels. Sally's always blushing cheeks blushed redder with the contact, and she nimbly drew out of his embrace and stepped to the ground. Jeff covered his lapse with a hasty examination of the wreck, and a string of mild expletives.

"Durn the blame thing! We cain't no ways get home in it now, Sally," he complained. "Wish I could fasten up that axle, but I haint got no wire." He pondered over the situation for a moment. "Tell you what we'll have to do, Sally," he continued. "I'll tie Whitey here to the fence an' foot it back to the Forks an'





As the enraged mother-bear rounded the building, a flying form darted inside, and the door crashed shut against her snarling face.

get some baling wire while you wait here; I won't be gone an hour."

"I reckon that's the best we can do," Sally agreed. "But tell you what, Jeff: 'stead o' waitin' here, I'll tramp over to the old deserted farm an' gather a mess o' wild strawberries. It's only just across the rise yonder. There's a sight o' them growin' in the pasture-lot, an' nobody hardly ever goes there berryin'. You can stop to home with Ma an' me fer supper an' have some o' them too," she offered, smiling rosily.

Jeff grinned happily. "Now, that's fine, Sally; you bet I will. An' I got an old grain-bag under the seat you can pick 'em in." He fished it out, and handing it to Sally, strode rapidly back along the road they had traveled.

Sally's lithe young figure swung easily over the rocky, tree-grown rise, and shortly she came to the pasture where the wild strawberries grew. Here the profusion of small scarlet fruit peeping enticingly from its leafy screen delighted her eyes, and she stood for a moment gazing over the inviting prospect. At the far side of the pasture she had a fleeting glimpse of two bears, mother and cub, just before they vanished around a hummock. The wind was blowing toward Sally, and they apparently had not become aware of her presence. The sight brought no fear to the backwoods-bred girl, for she knew that unless provoked into defense, the black bears of the region would avoid humankind whenever possible. Rather, she found delight in the incident. "The cunning thing!" Sally murmured smilingly as she noted the funny waddling gait of the cub. "He's got a tummy full o' berries, I reckon, an' can only just toddle after his ma."

She fell to picking the fragrant fruit. Gradually she approached the north edge of the pasture, where the

gloomy spruce-forest reared its dark green-and-black wall. A peculiar chill grew upon her as she drew nearer to the wood. She frowned impatiently at the unpleasant sensation and sought to shrug it away. But it persisted, and something impelled her to glance half apprehensively toward the uprearing tree-growth.

Her eyes widened with fear at what they beheld, and she knew that she should have heeded earlier the strange warning semiconsciousness of being spied upon by a malignant presence. For a slender, sinuous form, slaty-blue in the shadowy half-light of the trees, was gliding toward her. It was a panther, and she shuddered with sickening dread, as all the tales she had heard of the animal's cruelty when once it was inspired to attack a human flitted through her mind. While her thoughts raced, the panther was slowly creeping nearer, its gaunt body hugging the ground, the long tail twitching its premonition of a leap. She still stood staring at it, fascinated by the green-glowing eyes that stared malevolently in return. She knew what the twitching of its tail meant—that the big cat was about to leap, that in two or three quick, short bounds it would be upon her. With a scream, she turned and fled.

Instinctively she headed for the old deserted cabin, for the idea that she might possibly gain it and shut herself in against the panther had quickly occurred to her. For a brief moment the animal hesitated; the shrill cry dismayed it, and it shrank back, snarling in angry fear.

Then the strong urge that already had overcome the great cat's hereditary indisposition to attack a human prevailed again, and with the encouragement of the girl's evident fright, it bounded after her. Its sinewy, graceful body curved over the ground in swift pursuit, but Sally's strong young limbs were fleet, and she flew over the springy

ground like a deer. For a distance she maintained her lead, but soon she realized with horror that the panther was gaining on her.

As she drew closer to the cabin, Sally noted thankfully that the door was open. She gave a spurt and reached the door-yard a rod or two ahead of her pursuer.

But just as she was about to plunge through the doorway, she was appalled by the sudden apparition that rounded the corner of the cabin. A big black demon of a bear, with surprising agility for so lumbering a body, shot toward her with a ferocious, menacing cough. She saw its gleaming, savage teeth and evilly snapping red-rimmed eyes, as the beast, almost upon her, struck out savagely with its deadly claw-armed forefoot. But the spurt carried her through the opening a fraction of a second in advance of the blow, and she whirled about and slammed shut the door as the monster rushed upon it. Feeling feverishly for the fastening, her fingers fell upon the rude wooden bar which by good fortune remained intact, and she dropped it quickly into place. Then she sank to the floor, quivering and shaken.

ALMOST instantly there arose on the other side of the door a raucous confusion of snarls, growls and thrashing bodies. Sally understood what had taken place; she had not had time to realize the likelihood of this meeting of the two pursuers, and the evidence that her assailants had come together in battle sent her into a spasm of hysterical laughter.

Outside, the combat raged fiercely. Seldom does a panther venture to attack a bear; and if the bear has a cub, then the big cat will avoid a meeting with all possible haste. And the bear, unless it is a she bear whose cub is threatened, will evade conflict with a panther if evasion is compatible with dignity.

But in this instance the paths of both animals had converged to a common point; each was intent on striking down the human who had escaped at the place of meeting, and each was inflamed with the lust to kill. As in the cub lay the impelling motive of the bear's attempt to destroy the supposed enemy, so the panther's own offspring were the moving cause of her murderous venture. Fearful of humans as she was, the short commons on which she had subsisted since the recent disappearance of her mate had made her ravenous for food. The drain upon her body by her two always-hungry cubs required hearty fare, and if she was to satisfy them, she must forage more successfully than she had of late.

Consequently when the woman, whom the panther instinctively knew was the less dangerous of the hated mankind, had appeared before her eyes as she noiselessly prowled the thickets for game, the pangs of famine had overcome her dread. Forthwith she had begun a furtive stalking of the unsuspecting berry-picker.

When the expected quarry darted into the log sanctuary, and the bear miraculously shot into view at the same instant, the panther had neither opportunity nor inclination to draw back. The bear was interfering with her hunt, the unforgivable breach of law among the wild earthlings, and she descended upon the back of the hulking black interloper in a frenzy of rage and disappointment.

The bear twisted about impotently, then rolled over, the better to dislodge the clutching horror. Her heavy



weight nearly crushed the breath out of the panther's body, but the cat managed to retain her advantage by squirming around until

the two were locked

in a death-grapple face to face. Here the panther was better placed for the deadly work of her claws, and she raked the bear's vulnerable spots with long eviscerating strokes. The bear was by no means idle with her own deep-cutting weapons, which tore mercilessly at the tawny hide; while both infuriated fighters were employing their savage jaws with ruthless energy.

THE bear, being at a woeful disadvantage, was the first to weaken. Her opponent suddenly bored into the relaxing neck, and her searching teeth speedily brought an end to the heavier animal's resistance. The bear collapsed in a sprawling, inert black heap, and the victorious cat staggeringly withdrew from her vanquished enemy. The object of her chase forgotten, she dragged her lacerated body away from the battle-ground, and slowly and painfully crawled in the direction of her den.

Her heart beating wildly as her ferocious jailers fought just outside the door of her refuge, Sally glanced about the cabin for a weapon. But nothing offered. She wondered if the victor would try to force an entrance, and how soon the fight would end. One or the other of the animals must soon succumb in the grim contest. Several times the struggling animals brought up against the door, which creaked ominously with the impact; and once Sally's heart came up into her throat as a particularly violent crash caused several of the decaying wooden pegs of the fastenings to snap under the stress. She leaned her weight against the bulging planks and held the bar in place with her hands. The door withstood the shock, and shortly the danger passed for the moment, as the wildly agitated bodies rolled away.

The sounds of conflict gradually diminished in fury as the minutes passed, until the listening girl could hear only the low grumble of worrying jaws. Finally Sally's straining ears heard a gurgling, choking sigh—and then quiet. Now her fear rose again as she wondered what might next transpire. Apprehensively she set her gaze on the window, through which she half expected to see a fierce head appear as the victor inexorably returned to its first quest.

But a faint call came through the window instead. Sally's heart beat faster with joy as she recognized Jeff's voice. Then a new dread assailed her—perhaps Jeff would, all unwarned, run into whichever animal it was that had survived, and would be attacked by it! Ignoring the danger to herself in drawing the beast's attention, she approached the window and screamed a caution to Jeff, whom she could now discern running across the pasture toward the cabin. Her voice drowned out his own shouts as he raced toward her, either failing to hear her warning or choosing to ignore it.

He was without any weapon of defense, and the danger into which he came plunging with great unheeding strides filled her with misgivings. A feeling that was more than anxiety, more than admiration, surged into Sally's heart. Under its prompting she turned swiftly, lifted the bar of the door, and throwing it open, ran out to meet her man, to share with him the peril he was braving for her sake. She almost stumbled upon the dead bear; it was the panther they had to fear.

A joyous shout greeted her. Jeff bounded forward and gathered her to him. For a moment she struggled and tried to tell him of the danger that lurked about, but he quickly reassured her. Then as the truth dawned upon Sally, she quieted in his arms, and he held her close, this time as though by right. Into the eyes of each slowly there crept an understanding that made unnecessary the halting words Jeff had been about to utter when the buckboard collapsed—a pledge as irrevocable in the minds of these two as any ceremony.

Happy and unabashed they stood holding each other's hands as Sally detailed her experience and Jeff explained his coming.

"I feared for you, Sally, when I saw where you dropped the bag o' strawberries in the pasture. I'd come over to find you when I got back to the buckboard an' you wasn't there. Then I shouted an' looked all about, and saw your runnin' tracks an' the tracks of a panther. I follered them, and I was scared.

"When I glimpsed the building, I see a bear, stretched out an' done fer alongside the door, an' I didn't know what to make of it, bein' expectant of a panther. Then I see somethin' else movin' off, an' *that* was the panther, crawlin' slow like it was jest barely alive; an' afore I looked away, it rolled over an' didn't get up again. I wondered what had happened to you, with those two varmints—"

"What's that, Jeff?" interrupted Sally nervously, pressing closer to him. They listened, and heard the whining of an animal in distress, the sound strangely stifled.

"Reckon it's only another critter tryin' to make trouble, Sally," said Jeff lightly. In his rôle of protector to the girl who was now his, he felt no doubt of his ability to conquer anything that threatened. "Doesn't sound very dangerous, though. Don't be afear'd." He studied the plaintive cry intently. His forest-trained ears quickly identified it.

"It's a young one, most likely a bear-cub. Let's look."

"Of course," remembered Sally. "I'd forgot about the cub I see with the mother-bear when I first got to the pasture. I wonder where on earth it can be."

Together they searched to locate its hiding-place. The whimpering calls finally drew them to the well, and looking down, they saw the imprisoned baby bear.

"The poor little thing!" said Sally compassionately. "It's frightened to death."

"Yes, an' that explains why the old she bear went fer you so savage," Jeff enlightened her. "When she heard you a-runnin' toward the place, she jest naturally thought 'twas you dug the hole to ketch her cub an' was comin' to kill it. Lucky you got in when you did, Sally," he added huskily. He knew something of the fury of a mother-bear when her cub was endangered.

"Can't you get it out, Jeff?" asked Sally. "We mustn't leave it here to die."

"O' course; but I'll have to get a rope an' some one to help. I'm curious about that panther, though; let's have a look at it first.

They followed the bloody trail of the animal until they came to where it had fallen in its tracks. The stark, tawny form showed grim proof of the punishment its adversary

had inflicted, and the wonder was that the big cat had dragged its sorely wounded body so far. In the gaunt flanks and the evidence of its motherhood the woodsman's eyes read another chapter of the tragedy.

"An' now I understand somethin' else," he said. "'Taint often a panther'll attack a human, but this one has cubs som'eres back in the bush an' was nearly starved tryin' to get enough food fer herself an' them. It must've been her mate Sam Hitchcock killed a week back. So now there's a couple o' young ones that wont never grow up to kill sheep."

"But oh, Jeff, we can't let those poor little kittens starve!"

Sally's blue eyes had grown tender with pity for the helpless cubs that doubtless were even now feeling the pangs of hunger. Before her supplicating gaze Jeff's practical viewpoint underwent a change.

"I reckon I'll have to hunt 'em out, Sally, if you say so," he said indulgently. "But first thing to do is to get you home to your ma; she'll be worryin' about you. Then me an' your pa can come back with a rope, an' I'll fish out the bear-cub an' then back-track the panther to her den an'—What'll I do with 'em all, Sally—kill 'em to save their lives?" he grinned.

Sally was nonplused for a moment. She hated the thought of having three innocent, cunning little wild babies killed, even if they were of the "varmint" kind. But of course it wouldn't do to turn the barnyard into a menagerie; her father would have objections. Then her face became brighter, and she beamed a shy smile.

"We could sell 'em to that collector o' wild animals for circuses who comes around, Jeff, an' buy a lot o' nice homy things—" Sally paused, blushing at the picture her words called up.

"You bet we can!" agreed Jeff delightedly, admiration for the clever thought shining in his eyes. "You got a wonderful little head, Sally—you certain have."

Jeff's delight was more for this spoken proof of the wonderful new relationship between them than for the material aspect of Sally's plan; but he added a suggestion of his own. "Don't forget that we got a fine bearskin

rug for the house already, Sally. Pity a panther hide aint any good in summer-time; we'd have our floor nigh covered!" He kissed her glowing cheeks.

"Let's hurry back to the road so's I can start early on my collectin' trip," he proposed; and hand in hand they raced happily across the strawberry-matted pasture.





He was a bad actor, that poor little rich boy. But before Mlle. d'Auvergne (née Kitty Horrigan) was through with him, he could sit up and beg, and roll over and play dead just as docilely as one of her trained tigers.

The MAN-TAMER

BY JOHN
BARTON OXFORD

Illustrated by
GEORGE O. BAKER

a honeyed smile the import of which the manager had come to know only too well.

She began tearing the offending card into yet smaller bits.

"I've never seen him round here before, nor never heard of his being in places like this," the manager told her. "Dignity—why, that's his middle name, and respectability fairly oozes out of him. You'd oughter heard him asking for you, very lofty-like yet deferential, like you were a countess or something of the kind."

Mlle. d'Auvergne's expression became a trifle more cynical.

"Yeh!" she said thoughtfully. "Pillar of the church and all that, I suppose!"

She pieced the bits of torn card together and regarded the result musingly. Then she smiled, not the former too-honeyed smile, but her ordinary, everyday, amazingly pleasant one.

"Send him up!" she instructed the manager, and dodged forthwith into the dressing-room, where she snapped her fingers at a maid dozing on one of the wardrobe trunks.

"That tailored skirt, Jeanne, quick, and a plain white waist! Get me into them!" she commanded. "Some one's coming up here in a minute."

A few moments later, when a tap sounded on the dressing-room door, Mlle. d'Auvergne, in the severely plain costume, was wiping the last trace of rouge from her lips.

It was the manager who had knocked on the door. Behind him, as Jeanne opened it a discreet crack, Mademoiselle could see a small, slightly stooping man, very thin, very wizened, with a bristling white mustache and a pair of keen eyes that seemed to take in everything at once and to bore through you when they rested upon you.

At a low-voiced command from her mistress, Jeanne opened the door wider. The manager introduced his charge and withdrew. Bradley P. Caldwell took the place in, every last detail of it, with one of those sweeping glances of his, which rested finally on the severely clad little figure before him. Then he sat down in the chair Jeanne pulled up for him.

"I apologize for intruding on you in this fashion, mademoiselle," he said in a voice out of all proportion to his thin body—a voice deep and rumbling and having in it that indefinable quality that commands instant attention. "This is hardly a habit of mine. I leave that to other members of my family."

THE manager of the Garden of Follies himself brought the card to Mlle. d'Auvergne. The manager wasn't sending any cards to Mlle. d'Auvergne by call-boys, particularly a card that bore the name of the one in his hands.

Mademoiselle was just turning into her dressing-room as the manager came puffing up. He carried far too much flesh to negotiate the steep flight of iron steps that led to the tiers of dressing-rooms with anything like comfort.

"Waiting right now in my office," the manager explained as he passed her the bit of pasteboard.

She pulled closer about her the bath-wrap covered with flying peacocks embroidered in gold thread, and stepped nearer to one of the lights dotting the iron ceiling of the passageway. A moment ago she had stepped, bowing and smiling, out of a huge cage wherein a motley pyramid composed of two lions, a Bengal tiger, a pair of leopards and a hyena at the apex, had closed her act.

She read the name on the card with a scornful curving of her rouged lips.

"In *your* office? Huh! What'll he try next?" she said, and tore the card in two.

"Oh, hold on!" the manager demurred. "This aint the kid. It's the old boy himself—old Bradley P. Caldwell in the flesh, down there in my office, askin' for you and lookin' like he had something important on his mind."

"Running through the family, isn't it?" she said with

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The hint of a grim smile played under the bristly mustache as he spoke. Mademoiselle inclined her head ever so slightly, as if she could quite believe that to be a fact.

"It is a business proposition, pure and simple, that has brought me here," he went on. "So we won't waste time with useless preliminaries. I like the way you handle the animals in your act. I like the way they're trained. I have never before seen any so thoroughly broken in, so quick to do the thing they're ordered. You trained them yourself, mademoiselle?"

"I trained them, all of them," the girl said quietly.

"Good! So I surmised, and that is why I'm here. I want an animal trained. I'll pay you a record price for the training."

Mlle. d'Auvergne had a pair of deep blue eyes with the continual hint of a twinkle in them. They were the sort of eyes that would have done credit to Connemara.

Also her nose was of the upturned variety that one may encounter within the confines of the said county at any hour of the day. Her real name, when one knew it, rather heightened these effects. Just now the blue eyes sparkled rather more than usual, and the upturned nose went a fraction of an inch higher. All in all, Mlle. d'Auvergne was good to look upon at that moment.

"What sort of an animal is it?" she asked.

"One that will tax all your energy and all your nerve and all your resources to train properly, I am convinced," said he. "In short, it's my son."

The girl caught her breath sharply. The amused light died out of the blue eyes.

"I have heard of him," said she.

"No doubt," he replied. "Who hasn't? I have come to you, mademoiselle, with the rather extraordinary proposition I am about to make you because, as I say, I like your methods with your animals. I am convinced you could handle the unruly human animal quite as efficiently. My son, it is commonly reported, is madly infatuated with you."

"It isn't commonly reported that I am madly infatuated with him," she said in a cold little voice.

"On the contrary, it is reported you are not at all infatuated with him, madly or otherwise. It is reported, in fact, that you have refused to be introduced to him. I have taken the liberty, mademoiselle, of prying somewhat into your private affairs. What I have learned strengthens my conviction that you can do this thing I want done."

"You haven't told me yet what it is," she reminded him.

"I am coming to it," said he. "He is, as I say, infatuated with you. He has tried every way he could to meet me—unsuccessfully so far, I learn. He has had infatu-

ations before—many of them, Heaven help us! But never before has it been for anyone like you. You represent to me efficiency, good sense and respectability. I made very sure about all this before I came to you.

"Let him meet you and run about with you. Train him as you'd train one of your animals. He is mad about you. That should make it easier for you. Make him beg, make him cringe, make him obey. I don't know what your yearly earnings are, but whatever they are, I'll give you twice the amount for this job—half when you start in, the rest when you turn him over to me the man I believe you can make out of him."

The girl listened quietly enough while he was speaking, but her lips grew more and more tense as he went on.

"Just how would you expect me to do this?" she asked with irony.

"I should leave that to you," said he.

"It's preposterous."

"Why?"

"I am an animal-trainer."

"He is an animal, now."

She shook her head with emphasis.

"It's utterly absurd."

"Not at all. Indeed, it's a wholly sensible scheme. I don't ask you to decide at once. Think it over and let me know in the course of a few days."

"I shouldn't change my mind," she told him flatly.

He arose, opened the dressing-room door and bowed himself into the narrow passageway beyond.

"Double what you can make in a year, I'll pay," he said then, turning, "half in advance, the rest when you have finished. Isn't it worth trying for? Think it over!"

He bowed again and softly closed the door. She heard his footsteps ringing down the iron floor of the passageway to the steep stairs. She threw back her head and began to laugh heartily at the very absurdity of Caldwell's proposition. But in the midst of her laughter, her mind reverted to the bent figure craning eagerly forward in the chair, an anxious, distraught little old figure despite that heavy, domineering voice and the eyes that bored into you like a pair of gimlets. The laughter ceased. Just beneath the mirror of the dressing-table lay the long raw-hide whip she used in the cage. She caught it up and struck the tailored skirt several crisp, resounding blows.

Jeanne, shaking out the stage clothes which had been tossed behind a screen, turned about and smiled.

"Mademoiselle, then, will try it?" she said softly.

Mlle. d'Auvergne tossed the whip from her.

"No!" she said with such emphasis that Jeanne, smiling to herself, knew it was a woman's no.

Three days later a small white envelope was laid on



"One that will tax all your energy and all your nerve and all your resources to train properly," said he. "In short, it's my son."



Mlle. d'Auvergne stepped to the door. Bradley P., Jr., was in evening clothes. In his eyes lurked a hint of rollicking devil which brooked no restraint. He bore a spray of orchids and an overgrown box.

the desk in Bradley P. Caldwell's private office. Within it was an engraved card, bearing the name "Mlle. Valerie d'Auvergne." In one corner was penned in a sprawling hand: "May I see you to-night at the Garden at twenty?"

At the appointed hour that evening Bradley P. Caldwell was knocking on the door of the animal-trainer's dressing-room. Mlle. d'Auvergne was in the same severe costume. She might have been a school-teacher or a stenographer or any one of a hundred successful young business women, so far as appearances went.

"I have seen your son," she said when he was seated. He nodded, smiling grimly.

"He's pretty much of a mess, isn't he?"

"Undoubtedly."

"That's what would make it worth while. I always did like to tame the animals that had the meanest dispositions."

"Then you'll try it?" he asked eagerly.

"I've got to know a few things first. The main point is, do I have an absolutely free hand?"

"What do I understand by that?"

"Just what I say. Do I have the assurance of no interference whatever for a year?"

"I told you at the beginning it would all be left to you as to methods."

"No matter what happens?"
He looked her over searchingly. He seemed satisfied with his scrutiny.

"No matter what happens," he promised her.

"Then I think I'll try," she said.

Without a word he thrust his hand into an inner pocket and drew out a check-book. He began shaking ink into a badly-feeding fountain pen he took from another pocket.

"How much is this first installment?" he asked.

"I'll take it in a lump sum when the goods are delivered," she laughed. "Besides, I'm not absolutely sure what I shall make this coming year. It will be rather more than I've made before this."

"Well, something on account for expenses?" he suggested.

She shook her head.

"There won't be any expenses," she observed.

He got up and put out his hand to her. His keen eyes lighted eagerly.

"You can do it," he said. "I know it. I've felt it from the first. The boy's a mess, all right, as you say. But he isn't all bad. There's at least a germ of good in him for you to work on."

"That's the main thing that induced me to try this," he said.

A scant ten minutes after the senior Caldwell had taken his departure, Jeanne answered a summons on the dressing-room door to receive from a call-boy in trim uniform one of those cards which had been coming thither every evening of late with the regularity of clockwork. She handed it to Mlle. d'Auvergne.

"Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr.," the latter read in the plain Roman type of the engraving.

"Mademoiselle has already left?" Jeanne suggested in a colorless voice that bespoke countless repetitions of that particular phrase.

But Mlle. d'Auvergne, the card still in her hand, her firm red lips just a trifle firmer than usual, herself stepped to the door.

"You may bring him up," she said to the highly astonished call-boy.

Stray bits of the haunting music of "The Firefly Ballet," at that moment occupying the stage, came drifting back to young Bradley P. Caldwell as he stumbled up the iron stairs in the wake of one of those necessary functionaries who carry canes and huge baskets of flowers and equally huge boxes of bouquets from the stage door of the Garden of Follies to the cell-like dressing-rooms.

Bradley P., Jr., was in evening clothes. He was a tall young man with a pair of square shoulders which hunched forward slightly.

His face had certain good lines about it—the finely cut nose, for instance, and the distinctive brows. He would have been decidedly handsome but for the pastiness of the skin and the purple puffs beneath his eyes. In his eyes, deep brown and rather pleasant-seeming, lurked a hint of rollicking devil which brooked no restraint, passed up no dares. Quite as he had done on all his countless unavailing excursions thither heretofore, he bore a large spray of expensive orchids and an overgrown box tied with red-and-gold cord. The breath of a young distillery announced his coming and marked his passing.

His guide tapped on Mlle. d'Auvergne's door. Bradley P., Jr., stood behind him, swaying slightly and smiling. He was smiling because he fancied that he knew the genus *femme* from A to Z, and that once more, as was always the case, persistence had brought him his reward.

Jeanne opened the door. Behind Jeanne, standing by the dressing-table in that same severe skirt and that same plain waist, the pliant black whip of twisted leather thongs in her right hand, was Mlle. d'Auvergne. She was a very straight, a very unbending little figure as she stood there stiffly erect, with the shaded lights just above the long mirror of the dressing-table bringing out the almost invisible line of freckles across the bridge of her nose.

All in all she seemed to Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., the most bewitching, the most wholly alluring young woman it had ever been his fortune to encounter. His smile grew yet more satisfied; he bowed stiffly, with too apparent caution.

"Mademoiselle, I am too greatly honored," he said, and made as if to step inside; but Mlle. d'Auvergne stopped him with a quick, imperious little gesture. Also the animal-whip snapped smartly against her skirt.

"Leave your bundles outside," she said sharply. "Yes, put them there—on the floor!"

Young Caldwell's self-satisfied smile suffered a temporary setback. The hint of an annoyed frown replaced it. He started to march boldly across the threshold, accoutered as he was with expensive orchids and bouquets of unreasonable price. Then he looked at the girl again, thought better of it and meekly laid his orchids and his overlarge box on the iron floor of the passageway.

"Now may I come in?" he asked with a deference that was belied only by that rollicking devil in the brown eyes.

"Just for a moment—yes!"

He advanced, holding out a hand the girl did not seem to see.

"I have let you come up here to-night that you may understand once for all that I am *not* in the habit of running about with empty-headed little boys who hang around stage doors," she told him.

He listened gravely and slowly bent his head.

"I believe that, mademoiselle," said he. "That was why I was so anxious to come."

"And now that you realize it, hadn't you better just toddle on your way again?"

He considered this suggestion, regarding the pointed toe of one shoe and still swaying to and fro.

"No," he said at length with emphasis. "No, indeed! Not just yet—not until I know I can see you again sometime."

"In the same shape you're in now?" she asked with a biting

edge to each separate word.

"No," said he. "Different—much different, Mlle. d'Auvergne."

"That is my name for the front of the house," she snapped. "Back here I'm Kitty Horrigan."

"Kitty Horrigan!" he repeated softly, a whimsical twinkle in those brown eyes. "That's a pretty name—much prettier than the other. Fits you better, too—doesn't sag so."

There was the hint of an answering twinkle in the girl's eyes. Young Caldwell, quick to catch it, took hope.

THE FIGHTING ON THE ITALIAN FRONT

The first writer of fiction to see the dramatic possibilities in the contest on the Italian front is Captain F. Britten Austin, whose "Nach Verdun" and "In the Hindenburg Line" have been the outstanding war stories. Captain Britten-Austin has written for the next—the May—issue of The Red Book Magazine

"THE PLATEAU OF THIRST"

which we consider a more intense and a better written short story than any he has done. If you fail to get a thrill as you read it, you'd better ask the doctor what's wrong with your nerves.

"May I come again?" he begged. "Wont you say I may come again if I'll come—different?"

The girl's mouth became a straight, unyielding line. "You may come,"—his pulses leaped at the unexpected words—"a week from to-night at the same time. We will see what a week can do for you."

He engineered another cautious bow.

"A week from to-night," he said. "I think I shall surprise you with the—the change in myself, Mademoi—Miss Horrigan. Good night!"

There was a certain quiet dignity to his bearing as he went out. But in the passageway she called him back.

"Take those with you," she said, pointing to the things he had left just outside the dressing-room door.

He bent down to pick them up.

"And don't make *that* mistake again."

"I wont," he promised.

She listened to the clank of unsteady footsteps along the passageway, down the iron stairs.

"Mr. Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., next Wednesday evening at ten-thirty," she said to Jeanne. "Make a note of it."

LONG after "The Firefly Ballet"—the closing act on the Garden of Follies bill—was over that night, long after the opening and closing of neighboring doors and the chatter of voices had ceased in the passageway, Kitty Horrigan sat on a trunk in her own little cell, figuring away joyously on the back of an old envelope.

Kitty Horrigan had long had in her mind's eye the vision of a certain duck-farm—a quiet place among the foothills where White Pekins waddled about with sleepy dignity or made fluffy white patches on the bosom of the adjoining lake. A rambling old red house with lilac bushes thick on either side of its flagged walk, and the quaintest old fireplaces imaginable, went with the place. Mlle. d'Auvergne dreamed of that place as well. She dreamed of it even in the circular cage when she was making Paul, the Nubian lion, open his big mouth to receive her curly head between his jaws, or when she was cowing down Sam, the Bengal tiger of uncertain disposition, or cracking the whip at Sleezer, the ever-snarling striped hyena.

She had seen that duck-farm—often. And for all her keenness of mind, she had fallen for the fiction of its present owner that ducks practically raised themselves.

She figured away joyously on that envelope: in two years, according to her old estimate, she could buy that duck-farm and be very comfortable from the double proceeds of marketable ducklings and feathers from the older birds. And she could have time to fix up that dear old house, and clean the grass from between the flags of the walk, and watch the sunsets behind the hills—while the ducks practically raised themselves, as she firmly believed now all ducks did; and she could forget that Sam's temper was always a menace, and that Sleezer was sick every little while, and that Paul's mange was becoming a serious thing with gentle old Paul's advancing years.

Two years had been her estimate; and now with what Caldwell, Sr., offered her, she would be able to cut a year from that figure. Mlle. d'Auvergne smiled happily.

JEANNE was turning the pages of a little book bound in limp black leather when Mlle. d'Auvergne came off the stage that next Wednesday evening. Although she gave no inkling of the fact, it was quite superfluous for Jeanne to announce in flat tones that Mr. Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., was to be expected at ten-thirty. Mademoiselle ordered Jeanne to lay out the tailored skirt and the plain white waist, but even as she slipped out of her stage clothes, she changed her mind.

"Make it one of those fluffy chiffon things instead, Jeanne," she said.

So it was in the fluffy chiffon thing that Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., saw her, when Jeanne opened the dressing-

room door for him at ten-thirty sharp. The fluffy thing was wonderfully becoming to her. The light leaped into young Caldwell's eyes told that plainly.

His step was much firmer than on that previous night also there was color in the cheeks, and the purple beneath the eyes were much less prominent. Bradley, Jr., seemed to have made good use of the week, even he promised to make good use of it.

THE girl noticed his extended hand as he came in time, and took it briefly in her own. His eyes fixed upon her with a light there was no mistaking.

"You stunning little beauty!" he said in a voice too low for even Jeanne's listening ears.

Mademoiselle dropped his hand and drew herself. The blue eyes shot out a cold, discouraging light. Bradley P., Jr., took no heed of danger-signals just then.

"You're going out to supper with me," he announced exuberant spirits.

"I thought you weren't going to make any more takes," she said shortly.

Bradley P. grinned boyishly. He had an extremely nice face when he grinned like that.

"I shall make them just as long as you wear such things as that," he declared, his admiring glances taking her from her fluffy hair to her trimly shod feet.

She did not seem to unbend in the least, but he was watching closely the play of light in those blue eyes.

"You are going with me, aren't you?" he asked with apparent confidence.

She did not answer him.

"It's all your fault for putting on a gown like that," he urged.

"Very well. I'll go, then," she said.

Jeanne slipped forward with a heavy wrap.

Together they went down the winding iron stairs. The old doorkeeper by that alleyway door looked, lifted his brows a trifle and went on with his eternal puffing at his worn old brier pipe.

"Wait here just a minute until I get a taxi," said young Caldwell.

"We'll walk," said she.

"It's a long way," he demurred.

"Not where we're going."

"I thought I had the say about that."

"You don't. We're going just two blocks west from here. We're going to a place where they have the finest Irish stew and dumplings in all the world. Irish stew is an appropriate dish for us just now. We'll eat it, perched on high stools in front of a horseshoe-shaped counter. The stews cost twenty cents each, and we'll each pay for our own."

He scowled, and made an impatient exclamation under his breath. But she moved down the dark little alley and perforce he went with her. Halfway down the gloomy place he threw back his head and laughed.

"You win!" he conceded.

She let him walk a little closer to her.

They climbed onto the high stools at a littered, horse-shoe-shaped counter, and ate twenty-cent Irish stews with dumplings, out of bowls that might have been dropped to the floor with impunity, and spoons the plating of which had long since worn off. Bradley P., Jr., after a few attempts at ingratiating blandishments which were promptly and effectively discouraged, seemed willing to accept the girl beside him in the rôle of a good pal. She unbent a trifle thereat.

Presently he laid down his spoon.

"This is bully," he announced with unmistakable sincerity.

"The stew?"

"The whole thing."

She speared a last elusive cube of carrot.

DORNTON'S QUICK LUNCH

OPEN
ALL
NIGHT

As he turned away at last, she called him back. "You're not a wholly bad sort, after all," she said. "Why don't you drop this foolish pace you've been hitting? Why don't you make something out of yourself?" "I would—for you," he said in a low voice.

"We'll come here often, wont we?" he enthused.

She thought that over for a time.

"Will you be just as you are now?" she asked doubtfully.

"Just as I am now," he promised her.

"And eat Irish stew?" Her eyes twinkled.

"Nothing else, surely."

"And each pay for his own?"

"If you want to have it that way."

"Very well, then. Remember the stipulations."

"I don't think you'll let me forget them. To-morrow night?"

She hesitated.

"Yes."

"And the next night, and the night after that, and so on, world without end?"

"We'll see about that. It depends on you."

"Well, watch me!"

"I intend to."

The rather grim emphasis escaped him, or he never would have laughed as lightly as he did.

They paid their separate checks at the cashier's desk. Outside she said good night, firmly, with a finality that discouraged his pleadings to see her to her door.

But as he turned away at last, she called him back. She stood with the light from the lunch-place throwing her into most engaging relief. There was a cynical smile on his face as he came back to her; he lost it when she began to speak.

"You're not a wholly bad sort, after all," she said, taking him in with a glance that seemed to be seeking out the hidden corners of his soul. "Why don't you drop this foolish pace you've been hitting? Why don't you make something out of yourself?"

He looked at her long and searchingly, there before the steamy, white-lettered window of the lunch-room. He tried to take her hand, but she was too quick for him.

"I would—for you," he said in a low voice.

She gave an impatient toss of her head.

"Bosh! That sort of stuff doesn't go with me. Haven't you found that out yet? Do it for yourself. It's worth while."

"Would you help me?"

"All I could."

He pondered this. It seemed to satisfy him to some degree, for at last he shut his teeth together with a click.

"Then I'll try."

THE little lunch-room with the horseshoe-shaped counter and the white-lettered front windows, where the best Irish stews with dumplings in all the world were served for twenty cents apiece, knew them often after that. They sat on the high stools chatting together like a pair of care-free children. Mlle. d'Auvergne began to think her task nearing its finish. It had all been very simple, very much easier than she had thought. And about the time she began to consider it was all over but the cheering, the thing happened.

For a whole week Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., did not come near the Garden of Follies. At the end of ten days the papers gave undue space to a very spicy and very respectable brawl at a certain unsavory inn in an outlying village. The name of Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., was over-prominent in all the reports.

A call-boy brought his card to the dressing-room the next evening. Mademoiselle put on the tailored skirt and the severely plain waist. Also she had Jeanne smooth every last ripple out of her hair.

It was after eleven when the young man was ushered up the winding stairs. He found himself pushing his way through groups of ogling girls, just off stage from "The Firefly Ballet." He did not notice them; he was much worried.

As soon as the dressing-room door was opened to him, he began a light-hearted account of his recent doings. He made it half whimsical, half apologetic. In the midst of it Mlle. d'Auvergne whirled upon him. Her eyes were ablaze, her lips drawn back from her small white teeth.

Once he had seen Sam shrink coweringly from her, growling, as he went to his corner in that big cage on the stage. And although he himself did not shrink now, he had something more than a sneaking sympathy and understanding for Sam.

"You promised," she fairly hissed at him.

"To try," he reminded her.

"You haven't tried," she shot back at him. "If you had tried, you wouldn't have been away from here for a week; nor would you have been mixed up in that nasty scrape at the Cup and Tankard."

"I'm sorry."

"Just words!"

"Let me prove it."

"How?"

"Give me another chance."

"Do you deserve it?"

"No."

She turned away.

"That's a hopeful sign—the first one you've shown. Maybe I will give you one more chance."

"An Irish stew with you would help a whole lot," he said meekly enough.

"Where's my wrap, Jeanne?" she said.

But at the little lunch-counter of the high stools and the thick crockery she was obviously on her guard. All his sorry attempts at the old-time gayety met with no response. He complained of this at last.

"Once," she said slowly, "Sleezer bit me when my back was turned—an ugly bite, here on my right ankle. I have the marks of his teeth there now. I never turned my back on him again."

He caught the significance of her words. He bent his head.

"I don't blame you," he said contritely. "But I'm not Sleezer, you know," he added hopefully.

"No animal is to be trusted," she told him.

His face reddened angrily, though he had the sense to say nothing.

But she was her old self again once, just before he left her on the sidewalk—she would never let him see her to her door. She agreed to forget this defection of his, to blot it out, to let him start afresh. He left her, walking on air and whistling light-heartedly.

SIX weeks later it was all repeated, only this time it was a row at an after-theater supper-place. She let him think she had washed her hands of him when finally he came to her dressing-room one night. She let him think so until he had gone out, angry, miserable, crushed, and was halfway down the winding stairs. Then she caught up with him, touched his arm, looked wholly adorable, held aloof for a proper space and finally went with him to their lunch-counter haunt on the next avenue.

For once the stew in the thick bowl before him was untasted. He noticed that she also was eating but little.

"I'd like to be half a man," he said drearily at last.

She shrugged her small shoulders.

"I could be, if I were with you all the time," he went on.

She looked up suddenly, caught a light in those brown eyes, and flushed beautifully.

"It's easy enough to be decent when I'm with you," he continued. "But away from you—"

He sat there poking the steaming stew with his spoon.

"Make a man of me," he begged. "Let me be with you always. Marry me!"

"Marry you!" she mocked. "You!"

"Am I wholly bad? Am I? Why don't you tell me



"Fashion is my passion.
I am always up-to-date.
And a steaming plate of 'Campbell's'
Is my favorite fashion-plate."



Economy is "all the fashion"

And a mighty wise fashion it is.

Right-minded people always believe in sensible economy. Today they are *proud of it*. No matter how much money they have they are ashamed to waste it.

Every intelligent and patriotic housewife studies food values, studies to provide her table with ample nourishment of the *right kind* at the least expense.

"Live well, but wisely and without waste!" That is what the National Food Administration asks of us all. And there is no food-product which gives you more practical help in this direction than

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Wholesome, hearty, tempting—it supplies the food elements most needed to complete a properly balanced diet.

We use selected beef to make the full-bodied satisfying stock. With this we combine choice white potatoes, Canadian rutabagas and tender Chantenay carrots—diced. Also small green peas, "baby" lima beans, "Country Gentleman" corn, Dutch cabbage, celery, parsley, green

okra and a puree of fine tomatoes. We add plenty of barley and rice, a sprinkling of alphabet macaroni and a delicate bit of leek, onion and sweet red peppers to enhance the attractive flavor.

Pure, rich in food value, and its use involving no waste nor cooking expense for you—this nourishing soup is in every sense as economical as it is appetizing and delicious.

Let your grocer send you a dozen or more at a time, and keep it on hand.

21 kinds

12c a can

Asparagus
Beef
Bouillon
Celery
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Consommé
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Mutton
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Tomato
Tomato-Okra
Vegetable
Vegetable-Beef
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Campbell's SOUPS

LOOK FOR THE RED-AND-WHITE LABEL

I am? Listen! With you with me always, it would be different. I'd be different. It's when I'm away from you I kick over the traces in the old way. Marry me! It would be the making of me!"

"And me?" she said in the same mocking tones.

"I believe you might do worse," he said slowly. "I'm terribly and tremendously in love with you."

She started to laugh, stopped short and looked him over, slowly, coolly, calculatingly, from head to foot. Then she bent her head and half closed her eyes. He could not know that she was thinking of white Pekin ducks floating about on a mirrorlike lake, and a rambling old red house, and a flaring autumn sunset behind a ragged line of hills.

"It's the only way," he urged.

She said at last: "What in creation would we live on? Would you want your wife on the Garden of Follies stage, shoeing fool animals through a lot of fool tricks?"

"No," said he hoarsely. "You wouldn't be on any stage if you married me."

"Maybe you think I have money saved up. I'm one of the sort that spends as I go."

"I shouldn't expect to live on any woman's money," he said quietly.

"Your father would probably cut off your present allowance, if you married anyone like me."

He leaned toward her, upsetting a pile of tissue-wrapped sandwiches on a glass stand.

"If I'll work for you with these two hands, if I'll steady down and get a job and hold it and earn a little place somewhere and enough to furnish it on the installment plan, will you marry me then?"

Her laughter rippled through that place of steaming coffee-urns and clattering dishes.

"I think I'm perfectly safe in saying yes," she said.

"I'll do it," he declared. "You're as good as mine, Kitty Horrigan. Me for a job instant. Watch me!"

THE front pages of the papers, which had given his numerous wild escapades space more than once before, played up the latest sensation concerning young Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr. It seemed he had perpetrated matrimony with a certain Mlle. d'Auvergne, erstwhile animal-queen at the Garden of Follies.

In his almost shabby downtown office, Bradley P. Caldwell, Sr., read all the accounts of the affair, grinned, scowled, tried to dismiss the matter from his mind—and found that he couldn't.

Wherefore at ten-twenty that evening the manager of the Garden of Follies took the senior Caldwell's card to Mlle. d'Auvergne's dressing-room. Again the manager in person ushered the wiry little old gentleman with the booming voice up the winding iron staircase.

Mademoiselle received him in her spangled stage-clothes covered by the bath-robe with the flying peacocks.

There was a particularly detailed account of the marriage, with pictures of the bride and groom, in one of the more

sensational evening sheets. Caldwell, Sr., had that particular evening sheet with him. He drew it from his coat pocket as he entered.

"Frankly, I hadn't expected you to go quite this far, mademoiselle," he began at once in his rumbling voice as he tapped the two pictures staring at him from the folded page. "I hadn't considered the possibility of the Caldwell name being used as an advertisement to further your interests on the stage."

The girl flushed angrily and bit her lip.

"I am not using the Caldwell name or any other name for that purpose," she said. "I'm leaving to-night. This is my last performance here. I only went through with it to-night because they couldn't book an act to fill in before to-morrow evening."

"Ah! Leaving, you say?"

Caldwell, Sr., looked decidedly ill at ease.

"I think you'll remember I asked at the outset for a free hand," the girl reminded him rather sharply.

Caldwell inclined his head in assent.

"I wasn't to be hampered in any way; I wasn't to be criticized for any means I adopted."

"Quite right," he conceded.

"Can't you see this is the only way? I tried others. They worked by spurts, but only by spurts. He'd be decent for weeks at a time, and then break out in something wilder than ever. He wanted to marry me, to work for me, to support me. He wanted me to leave the stage, insisted on that, in fact. I let him think I hadn't any money of my own. That was good for him. He believed, too, you wouldn't help him, and that I wouldn't listen to such a course even if you would. That was good for him too. So he's working. He's been working for two months—in the shipping-room of the Acme Belting Company. He's taken a little apartment, and he's furnished it on the installment plan. And I'm leaving here to-night to let him work for me. Can't you see now it was the only thoroughly effective way?"

Caldwell's cold eyes began to glow. They were turned on the trim little figure before him with marked approval. But one point still troubled him.

"And afterward, the divorce-courts, I presume. Am I right?" he asked.

"We seem to have a remarkable similarity of ideas, Mr. Caldwell," she said with an impish smile that turned her nose a fraction of an inch higher.

Caldwell smote his knee in high amusement.

"You're a clever girl, my dear, a clever girl," he said admiringly. "When you're ready for the divorce, call on me. I can no doubt help. I know enough about that young scoundrel to hang him."

"Thanks! So do I," she said dryly.

IN one of those apartment-houses where the woodwork masquerades as something much more costly, and the automatic elevator sticks between floors, and the smell of many cooking dinners nightly pervades the hallways in the vicinity of six o'clock, Bradley P. Caldwell, Jr., opened an imitation-oak door bearing the numerals 28 and received the

floury embraces of an apron-enveloped young woman with a turned-up nose and eyes that shamed the blue of Connemara skies. An odor of raspberry turnovers came floating out from the kitchenette. Young Mr. Caldwell was very partial to his wife's raspberry turnovers. When he smelled them in the process of baking, he was wont to beg for them, using a very creditable imitation of old Paul begging for a scrap of meat in that round cage back at the Garden of Follies. He adopted such a course now and received the turnover fresh from the oven. A kiss went with it—several, in fact. Young Mr. Caldwell divided his time about equally between the turnover and the kisses, both of which commodities seemed to hit pretty close to where he lived.

"What do you know, hon?" he said between bites to the young woman perched on the arm of his chair—an overnew chair with ooze-leather cushions. "The old boy was snooping around the Acme plant to-day. Ticked to death to think I'm working, it seems. Wanted to find out if I really was making good at my job. Pumped the manager and swore him to secrecy, but the manager let it out to me. The old party seemed quite satisfied with my record, the manager says. Maybe he's going to relent and offer me a job with him."

The lady with the turned-up nose arose to get her lord another turnover.

"You deserve it," she said.

"You mean *you* deserve it for me," he laughed.

The imitation-oak door seemed in danger of disintegration at that moment from a thunderous summons upon it. Doors of its caliber were never intended to be pounded upon in that fashion. Bradley P., Jr., jumped up and swung it open. His father, with a nod and the shortest of greetings, strode into the place.

"I've looked you up at the Acme," he said, coming at once to the matter in hand. "You've done very well—very well indeed—on your own hook. Didn't know you had it in you, but it seems you have."

He swung about on his heel to greet the floury and be-aproned Mrs. Bradley P., Junior.

"About done, isn't he? About ready for delivery?" he inquired.

The girl nodded her pretty head. Her blue eyes were twinkling. She pulled up an overnew rocker for the senior Caldwell, who ignored it.

"If you can do that at the Acme, I guess you've got something in you, after all," he went on to his son. "I'll give you a chance with me, a real chance. Four thousand a year to start on."

The younger Caldwell leaped forward and gripped his father's hand. He was about to speak, but the older man sourly pulled his hand away and held it up warningly.

"Wait, before you slop over with gratitude," he said. "There's something goes with it. You'll divorce this animal-lady you've seen fit to marry without consulting me."

Caldwell, Jr., stepped forward. His face was white. His lips twitched. He did not raise his voice as he spoke, but the way it shook showed plainly he

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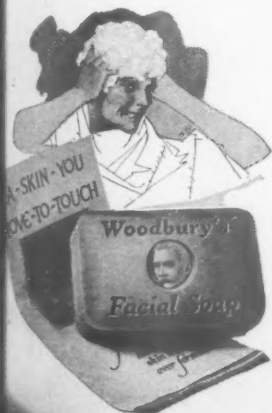


The Right Way to Shampoo

How this treatment helps your hair



your children keep their heritage
of lustrous hair. Train them early
in the habit of shampooing their hair
with the soap that keeps the scalp
healthy and vigorous



THE whole beauty and lustre of your hair depends upon your scalp. This is why caring for the hair is exactly the same as caring for your skin.

To keep your hair lovely and abundant, begin at once to keep your scalp healthy and vigorous by using persistently Woodbury's Facial Soap, formulated after years of study by John H. Woodbury, the famous skin specialist.

Try this famous shampoo

Before shampooing, rub the scalp thoroughly with the tips of the fingers (not the finger nails). Do not let the fingers slip along the scalp, but make the scalp itself move in little circles.

Now dip the hair in warm water, separate it into small parts and scrub the scalp with a stiff tooth-brush lathered with Woodbury's Facial Soap. Rub the lather in well and then rinse it out thoroughly.

Next apply a thick, hot lather of Woodbury's Facial Soap, and leave it on for two or three minutes. Clear off thoroughly with fresh, warm water. Finish by rinsing in cold fresh water. Dry very thoroughly.

Use this as a regular shampoo. You will enjoy the healthy, active feeling it gives your scalp. You will soon see the improvement in your hair—how much richer and softer it is.

For five or six shampoos, or for a month or six weeks of any of the famous facial treatments, the 25c cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap is sufficient. Around it is wrapped the booklet of famous Woodbury skin and scalp treatments. Get a cake to-day. Woodbury's is for sale at drug stores and toilet goods counters throughout the United States and Canada.

Send for sample cake of soap with booklet of famous treatments and samples of Woodbury's Facial Cream and Facial Powder

Send us 5c for a sample cake (enough for a shampoo or for a week of any Woodbury Facial treatment) together with the booklet of treatments "A Skin You Love to Touch." Or for 12c we will send you, in addition to these, samples of Woodbury's Facial Cream and Facial Powder. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1704 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio.

If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1704 Sherbrooke Street, Perth, Ontario.

Men enjoy the active, healthy feeling that a shampoo with Woodbury's Facial Soap gives to the scalp. Try the treatment given on this page. Use it regularly. See how it improves your hair

himself in check only by an effort that taxed the last ounce of his strength.

"If that's it, there's nothing doing," said he. "And nothing but your age saves you from going down the stairs pretty messily. Divorce her! She made me! She took me in hand when I was a mess—"

The senior Caldwell smiled wearily. He made an impatient gesture.

"Quite so! And who got her to do it? Who made the bargain with her? Who asked her to train you as she'd train one of her animals—to make you obedient, sober, decent, for once in your life? Who is going to pay her double what she'd earn in a year on the stage for this job? Ask her!"

The younger man turned to his wife. His face was livid now.

"Tell me it isn't so! For heaven's sake, tell me it isn't so!" he cried.

She was standing by the rocker, clutching its back with both hands. Her head was bent. She did not answer. There was just the slightest convulsive movement of her slim shoulders.

"Wake up, man!" said the elder Caldwell. "It was the only way to make a

man out of you. She did it, and made a good job of it. But it's a matter of business, pure and simple. She wants a divorce now."

Bradley P., Jr., swung about blindly. He bumped into the center-table. The ornate bronze reading-lamp overturned and went to its tinkling ruin. He did not notice it. He was groping his way toward the door.

"And I loved you—I loved you!" he was muttering bitterly.

"Where are you going?" Bradley, Sr., boomed sharply.

The younger man turned upon him fiercely.

"Where I'd tell you to go, if you weren't my father," he said, "only I'm going in deeper than I'd have sent even you!"

His fingers found the doorknob, turned it, flung the door open. There was a sharp cry from the girl. She ran to his side. She clung to him desperately; she patted his cheek; she smoothed his thick hair.

"Wait! Wait!" she begged. "Listen to me. You sha'n't suffer so, not even for a minute. Part of it is true. I did

start training you because he asked me to do it. I did start in just for the money he was going to pay me for the job, think, dear, think hard! Think of the past few months, and you'll realize—you'll have to realize—that I was training you just for myself!"

She turned to the older man, standing stiffly erect by the smashed reading-lamp.

"Go now, please!" she said. "Let him to me! You've done enough, think!"

But instead of going the elder Caldwell walked straight up to her and laid both hands on her shoulders.

"Don't you suppose I knew if you were his father now it would be his complete ruin if he said in that booming voice that he seemed to rattle the windows. 'You made him, but you've got to keep him made, now you've done it. I've known that for some time. It was you I was trying out just now, not him. I know from the first you'd stick to him, and rather thought you would. You know enough about people to realize that your kind never undertake a job unless they do it right!'"

THE JIGSAW

(Continued from page 74)

assume," said Mr. Conant firmly, and he took his leave not uncheerfully.

HAVING arranged the matter in the course of the day, Mr. Conant thought of relieving Miss Annen of any anxiety she might feel about it. Besides, there were a couple of articles on asteroids which she would certainly enjoy. Mr. Conant was not in the habit of calling on young ladies, for reasons. The first—idiosyncratic—had to do with their complacent uninterest in modern scientific progress. The second—generic in character—is known to all small-town bachelors of a shy and cautious temperament. Neither objection, however, appeared valid in the case of Rachel Annen. There could be no harm in taking advantage of the disgusting circumstance if she were really on the point of becoming engaged to that lout at Ashley.

Mr. Conant's mathematical mind had associated two and two. Howard Brookfield had a married brother living at Ashley. Rachel Annen spent her vacations with a relative near Ashley. Probably some well-to-do young farmer—that section abounds in well-to-do farmers!

He completely forgot the Ashley youth five minutes after entering Mrs. Kerndt's parlor. The fellow seemed to have no existence in Miss Annen's presence. Curious he had never noticed what a wholesome and attractive color she had, nor how beautiful were her eyes under their modest lids. Taking his leave, Mr. Conant had a daring inspiration.

"Have you ever seen an occultation through a telescope? One is due at nine-fifteen Thursday night—Alpha Aurigæ, I think. Perhaps," he added, thinking vaguely of chaperonage, "you know some other lady who would care to come?"

"Mrs. Kerndt would love it!"

"Bring her, then. And come early.

Oh, by the way!" Mr. Conant closed again the door he had opened. "Your reflection by the board is certain. I thought you might care to know."

She came toward him impulsively, her hand outstretched, her eyes suffused.

"Oh, Mr. Conant! And I thought—I thought you were against me!"

He took her hand in his.

"Why, Miss Rachel!" he said softly. He gripped the little hand closer. "Why, Miss Rachel!" he repeated.

THE early summer stars clustered clear in a jeweled, velvet sky. New-leaved vines wove a delicate, tremulous shadow-shield for the two on Mrs. Kerndt's narrow porch, a shadow-shield the thin, tendriled interstices of which did not exclude the stars.

"Oh, there's Arcturus!" exclaimed Rachel. "What a perfect night for telescoping! I'm afraid you're wasting it, Mr. Conant!"

"But you are going away to-morrow," objected Mr. Conant earnestly.

She laughed and sighed together, then sobered swiftly.

"Yes," she said.

Mr. Conant cleared his throat.

"Oh, what is that little star up there beside Mizar?" cried Rachel hastily.

"Alcor, probably. Miss Rachel—ah—possibly you've heard that the Jay house has been put on the market. I'm thinking of buying it."

"Oh, the Jay house is lovely! It's the finest in town except the Wilsons'."

"Are—are you fond of housekeeping, Miss Rachel?"

"I? Oh, yes! Mrs. Kerndt says I'm the worst boarder she ever had for messing around in the kitchen. She's lovely about it, though. But you must be—dreadfully rich, Mr. Conant!"

"No, no! Not rich—but comfortable,

comfortable! Money grows, Miss Rachel, when it's not used; and I've had nothing to use mine for, except a few astronomical instruments. I've been—very happy, Miss Rachel. Alone in the world since I was twenty-six; and I lack the faculty of making friends readily."

"Oh, no!"

"That's kind of you, but it's quite true. General topics of conversation do not interest me, aside from astronomical science, and I fear I sometimes wear people talking of that."

"No, no! How could they—"

"Even my little lectures to the high school pupils have sometimes failed to attract them. Yet I've taken pride in those lectures, Miss Rachel. I've taken pleasure in them. They've helped to bring me in touch with a side of life—Y spoke of children a moment ago, Miss Rachel. A man gets to feel that he owes something to the generation coming on. That's why I've been glad to work on the school-board."

"It's noble of you, Mr. Conant!"

"No, no! It's just been a makeshift. I want something more—something else. It's only half a life I've been living, Miss Rachel, only half a life! I want a home of my own! I—I want a wife of my own! Miss Rachel—Rachel—"

"Say! Conant! Mr. Conant!"

THE coarse, hearty shout, not without a hint of embarrassment, broke crashingly across the moment. In the street a man leaned out of a bar buggy, holding the reins in one hand, something white in the other.

Mr. Conant, starting as if he had been shot, sprang up nervously and hurried down the walk.

"You'll hafta excuse me fer interruptin'," went on the big voice. "Here them papers fer the bank. Didn't

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"All of us at home use Lux exclusively for gloves, blouses and anything else we may wash, ourselves. My mother has abandoned everything else since Lux made its appearance on the market."—Miss J. C. Waller, Chicago, Ill.



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The things you'd never put in the Family Laundry

YES, it's beginning to look dusky around the edges of the cuff and along the roll of the collar. Your precious new Georgette—you'd never dream of putting it in with the general laundry.

Your silk underwear, silk stockings, white satin collars—how they discolor, or yellow—how the threads break and grow weak when they are washed in the family laundry.

You cannot afford to have your nicest things go so fast. You, yourself, can now gently rinse the dirt out of your filmiest things—take them from the pure Lux suds soft and gleaming and new!

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No ruinous rubbing of fine fabrics

Lux comes in wonderful delicate white flakes—pure and transparent. They dissolve instantly in hot water. You whisk them into the richest, sudsiest lather that loosens all the dirt without a bit of rubbing—leaves the finest fabric clean and new—not a fiber roughened or weakened in any way.

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Fine Table Linens	Sport Coats	Fine Curtains

Lux is so pure that it will not harm anything that pure water alone will not injure

to leave town 'thout turnin' 'em over personal; an' Mis' Parrot figgered you'd—"

The voice sank to indistinctness as Mr. Conant reached the buggy side.

Rachel waited, swimming in a warm dream, aware of the interruption only as a half-welcome lengthening of these last unvisited, unplighted moments under the stars. In a little while now—

Mr. Conant came back. He walked with a curious rigid erectness. He stood before her. His voice was strained and sharp and hard.

"I will say—good evening, now. I believe I left my hat—"

"But—is anything the matter?"

"I have enjoyed our little talks greatly. And now, if you will permit me, I will

say good-by, and—wish you joy in your—prospects!"

"What? What prospects?"

"I refer to your marriage. I understood some time ago—"

"My—What do you mean?"

"It is common talk. The man I just spoke to asked when the wedding was to be. I inquired whose, and he said yours. You might have informed your friends—"

"But it isn't true!" cried Rachel passionately. "I'm not going to marry!"

A long moment he stared at her quivering and white in the dark.

"Yes, you are!" he whispered hoarsely. "You're going to marry me! Don't you dare say you're not! You're going

to marry me! Aren't you? Aren't you, Rachel? Rachel!"

"BUT I'm so sorry," murmured Conant, deep-eyed under the seal-brown of her bridal hat—in the Pullman nearing Niagara field! He really brought us together! I'm so sorry for poor Howard Ben! And he—can never!"

"Poor Howard!" echoed the groom, devouring her with eyes of sensate, impervious bliss. Furtively touched her hand, which instantly clung his own. "Don't worry about Howard, darling!" he whispered. "He's happy his way—working out jigsaw puzzles! And perhaps Mr. Conant was right

THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

(Continued from page 38)

concluded, "suppose you call in your cold-hearted manager who refused me alms on your credit, and give him orders to honor my sight-drafts. If I'm to light in Sequoia looking like ready money, I've got to have some high-class, tailor-made clothes, and a shine and a shave and a shampoo and a trunk and a private secretary. If there was a railroad running into Sequoia, I'd insist on a private car."

This final detail having been attended to, Mr. Ogilvy promptly proceeded to forget business and launched forth into a recital of his manifold adventures since leaving Princeton; and when at length all of their old classmates had been accounted for and listed as dead, married, prosperous or pauperized, the amiable and highly entertaining Buck took his departure with the announcement that he would look around a little and try to buy some good secondhand grading equipment and a locomotive, in addition to casting an eye over the labor situation and sending a few wires East for the purpose of sounding the market on steel rails. Always an enthusiast in all things, in his mind's eye Mr. Ogilvy could already see a long trainload of logs coming down the Northern California & Oregon Railroad, as he and Bryce had decided to christen the venture.

"N. C. & O.," Mr. Ogilvy murmured. "Sounds brisk and snappy. I like it. Hope that old hunk Pennington likes it too. He'll probably feel that N. C. & O. stands for *Northern California Outrage*."

WHEN Bryce Cardigan returned to Sequoia, his labors, in so far as the building of the road were concerned, had been completed. His agreement with Gregory of the Trinidad Redwood Timber Company had been signed, sealed and delivered; the money to build the road had been deposited in bank; and Buck Ogilvy was already spending it like a drunken sailor. From now on, Bryce could only watch, wait and pray.

On the next steamer a surveying party with complete camping-equipment arrived in Sequoia, purchased a wagon and two horses, piled their dunnage into the wagon and disappeared up-country. Hard on their heels came Mr. Buck Ogilvy, and occupied the bridal suite in the Hotel Sequoia, arrangements for which had previously been made by wire.

In the sitting-room of the suite Mr. Ogilvy installed a new desk, a filing-cabinet and a brisk young male secretary.

He had been in town less than an hour when the editor of *The Sequoia Sentinel* sent up his card. The announcement of the incorporation of the Northern California Outrage (for so had Mr. Ogilvy, in huge enjoyment of the misery he was about to create, dubbed the road) had previously been flashed to *The Sentinel* by the United Press Association, as a local feature story, and already speculation was rife in Sequoia as to the identity of the harebrained individuals who dared to back an enterprise as nebulous as the millennium. Mr. Ogilvy was expecting the visit—in fact, impatiently awaiting it; and since the easiest thing he did was to speak for publication, naturally the editor of *The Sentinel* got a story which, to that individual's simple soul, seemed to warrant a seven-column head—which it received. Having boned up on the literature of the Redwood Manufacturers' Association, what Buck Ogilvy didn't know about redwood timber, redwood lumber, the remaining redwood acreage and market conditions, past and present, might have been secreted in the editorial eye without seriously hampering the editorial sight. He stated that the capital behind the project was foreign, that he believed in the success of the project and that his entire fortune was dependent upon the completion of it. In glowing terms he spoke of the billions of tons of timber-products to be hauled out of this wonderfully fertile and little-known country, and confidently predicted for the county a future commercial supremacy that would be simply staggering to contemplate.

When Colonel Seth Pennington read this outburst he smiled. "That's a bright scheme on the part of that Trinidad Redwood Timber Company gang to start a railroad excitement and unload their white elephant," he declared. "A scheme like that stuck them with their timber, and I suppose they figure there's a sucker born every minute and that the same old gag might work again. Chances are they have a prospect in tow already."

When Bryce Cardigan read it, he laughed. The interview was so like Buck Ogilvy! In the morning the latter's automobile was brought up from the steam-

ship-dock, and accompanied by his secretary, Mr. Ogilvy disappeared into the north, following the bright new stakes his surveying-gang, and for three weeks was seen no more. As for Bryce Cardigan, that young man buckled down to business, and whenever questioned about the new railroad was careful to hush the idea.

ON a day when Bryce's mind happened to be occupied with thoughts of Shirley Sumner, he bumped into her on the main street of Sequoia, and to his great relief but profound surprise, he paused in his tracks, lifted his hat, smiled and opened his mouth to say something—thought better of it, changed his mind and continued on about his business. As Shirley passed him, she looked him squarely in the face, and in his glance there was neither coldness nor malice.

Bryce felt himself afire from heels to hair one instant, and cold and clammy the next, for Shirley spoke to him.

"Good morning, Mr. Cardigan."

He paused, turned and approached her. "Good morning, Shirley," he replied. "How have you been?"

"I might have been dead, for all the interest you took in me," she replied sharply. "As matters stand, I'm exceedingly well—thank you. By the way, are you still belligerent?"

He nodded. "I have to be."

"Still peeved at my uncle?"

Again he nodded.

"I think you're a great big growl," Bryce Cardigan, she flared at him suddenly. "You make me utterly weary."

"I'm sorry," he answered, "but just to present I am forced to subject you to the strain. Say a year from now, when things are different with me, I'll strive not to offend."

"I'll not be here a year from now," she warned him.

He bowed. "Then I'll go wherever you are—and bring you back." And with a mocking little grin, he lifted his hat and passed on.

In the next installment of Mr. Kyle's novel, in the May issue, on sale April 23rd, Colonel Pennington begins to smell a rat—and gets busy in characteristic fashion.



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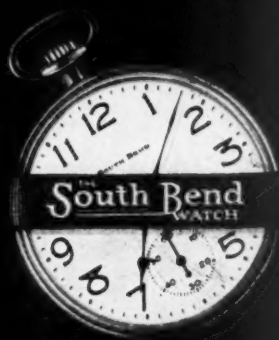
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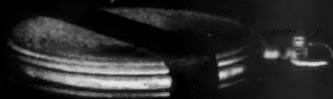
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THE LAIR OF THE KAISER

(Continued from
page 29)

the severest struggle, did not disillusion him. Excitement threatened so to betray him that the chemist drove his mind to the problem of the chemical combinations now possible to him.

"Obviously you understand that the political situation does not brook delay," von Engel said.

"Obviously, Herr Hauptmann. But the question of supplies, Herr Hauptmann—the chemicals which I need."

"Make a list, and they shall be supplied you instantly."

"Thank you, Herr Hauptmann. Then, when I am finished, how do I report?"

"I may come here myself, or—" Von Engel took a card from his pocket and scribbled upon it a few words. "That will admit you at any time to the castle grounds to report to me." He gave the card to Stroebel.

"Thank you, Herr Hauptmann."

"The list of requisites; make it up for me now. I personally shall wait," von Engel offered.

"You are very good, Herr Hauptmann."

STROEBEL, dismissed, delayed only a minute longer. He left von Engel and went to his laboratory, distinctly closing the door behind him. Then, quite silently, he opened it. His ears were very good, and he heard:

"Hetty, come here!"

"What is it, Herr Hauptmann?"

"Why are you such a silly girl, Hetty? Only to provoke me? If it is that, all right; I like it."

"How am I silly, Herr Hauptmann?"

"I offer you my honorable attentions!"

"Honorable, Herr Hauptmann?"

"Honorable, certainly! Where do you shut yourself up these days that you know nothing? Can you not read? Do you not hear what is to be done, these days? Every pretty girl like you is to be mated to some one fit! I say that seditions sweetheart of yours is not fit! And I—I offer you opportunity to do your duty to the Fatherland; and what do you say?"

"No! No! No!"

"You little fool! Then read that and consider! And think better. By God, you are pretty—"

There was the sound of a struggle, but von Engel caught the girl and kissed her.

Stroebel started to run, stumbling, down the hall; but as he caught himself, running came to him; and when he appeared to von Engel and his daughter, he apologized to the Captain for interrupting him.

"The list of requisites, Herr Hauptmann. You said to bring it to you."

"Oh, yes."

Stroebel gave him the list; and von Engel desired to delay no longer. He went out, and Stroebel turned to his little Hetty.

She had crumpled in her hand a paper which von Engel had thrust to her; and when her father demanded it, she at first refused it; but when he forced her to

give it to him, she tried to depreciate it by explaining: "It is only the general proclamation, Papa, distributed to soldiers and to all women now."

"I will see it," Stroebel said, and slowly he read aloud:

"Women in all classes of society who have reached a certain age are, in the interests of the Fatherland, not only authorized but called upon to enter into a secondary marriage which is supported by personal inclination. Only a married man may be the object of this inclination—" The father's voice cracked in its emotion, and for many words, he mumbled. Then he spoke clearly again:

"The offspring of these lawful—lawful," he repeated with terrible intensity, "lawful marriages bear the name of their mother, and are handed over to the care of the state, unless the mother assumes responsibility for them. They are to be regarded in every respect as fully equal members of society. The mothers wear a narrow wedding-ring as a sign of their patriotism! Patriotism!" Stroebel repeated.

"The difficulties consist solely in ethical scruples which, notwithstanding the issue of proper regulations by the state, will continue to operate until conscience has disposed of them. It rests, therefore, with the women and the clergy, assisted by the state, to determine whether Germany shall be able not only to maintain herself on her present pinnacle of morality, but by her own strength to stand up in the future, as in the present, to the pressure of enemies who are increasing numerically!"

He cast down the proclamation, and with his eyes streaming, he put out his hands and caught his little Hetty by the shoulders and held her before him.

"That goes, by the permission of the High Command, to our soldiers and the women and girls of Germany! O God! Make me Thy Voice! Think, little Hetty! How many times have I been so stupid as to blame Rolf for what he has done to our Luisa; and do you know, only a minute ago when I heard you and him here, I would have been satisfied to have killed only Captain von Engel!"

He looked past her and beyond with his blurred eyes, and gradually a great trembling came over him so that Hetty crept close to him as he turned her around and pointed her gaze up and out the window.

There was a stretch upon the slope of the castle grounds where, in one of the sieges long ago, the trees had been cut down and never replanted. It exposed a portion of the road to view, and far away upon the stretch and outlined against the snow appeared horsemen. Two rode by together, then two more, and after an interval, another pair.

"What do you see, *Liebchen*?" her

father asked. "What do you see?"

"Horsemen, that is all, Father."

"Riding how?"

She told him.

"Aye!" he said. "Fore-riders; and then His Majesty with his companion, and then two in the rear, just as we have seen

them before. For our Kaiser is come now to Ehernschloss!"

THE next day at noon this was known throughout most of the city; for as during previous visits of His Majesty, the members of the special police, who were charged with the safety of the All Highest, became very active. They shut off streets, guarded gates and suddenly entered and searched houses of His Majesty's subjects; among these homes searched was the cottage where Joseph Bolland lived with his mother. The police found nothing incriminating, but immediately after they had reported, Joseph received peremptory orders to present himself at the station the next morning where recruits were being gathered for dispatch to the regiments upon the west front.

Hetty had gone to town before the news reached her house; and when she returned, she found her father shut up in his laboratory, where he had been working almost ceaselessly since receiving his chemical supplies the day before.

"And when the voice of God," she made out the sound of the words which he repeated while he worked, "and when the voice of God called to him, he saw himself alone upon the earth, in the midst of phantoms, sad and without number."

She knocked.

"Little Hetty?" he cried excitedly.

"Yes, Papa."

"Stay away from the door; do not breathe there. Go away!"

"You are making gas?"

"Yes. Go to my room."

She went there, frightened by the sound of his voice; he joined her and told her of Joseph.

"This is von Engel's work, of course," he said while she stood staring before her. "You must marry Joseph to-night. . . . Why—what is the matter? You do not want to do it?"

"Want to, Papa? Oh, if I could!"

"That is what Joseph cried when he told me of this—if only he could marry you! Well, why can you not?"

She did not answer.

"Besides the desires of Captain von Engel, what is the impediment?" her father demanded. "None, I know. Joseph fears to bring you to harm at once if notice of your marriage is posted; you, I see, fear for him likewise. Well, we shall see whether in Germany to-day my daughter, even though approved of by a Captain von Engel, may not marry her sweetheart who has served the Fatherland as a soldier. I have sent, since Joseph was here, to the registrar to instruct that the usual public notice of your marriage at once be posted."

"Father!"

"By this time it is done. Joseph is in the city seeking you. I go back to my work; it is not quite complete."

HE went to his laboratory and locked himself in. Hetty, unable to follow him, ran out seeking Joseph. She met

him halfway out from the city on the road which surrounded the Schloss woods. He was walking quickly and with his head erect; a proud defiance of consequence had come to him—a defiance quite distinct from that boastful bravery of the boy who had marched off to battle singing "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles." It made many people who passed gaze at him wonderingly; it made Hetty's heart burn within her for him as never before, when he saw her and she saw his leaping exultation of love.

He seized her hands. "Notice of our marriage is given, my Hetty!"

"Yes!" She gazed up at him, her eyes filling. "Father has told me."

"A few friends already have congratulated me."

"I have met no one yet who has heard, Joseph, so I have not yet been congratulated."

"Come; we will walk along together now."

"Yes."

He turned her back toward her home, passing people who gazed at them smilingly and who knew so little that they envied these lovers; then they met one or two who had heard of the notice of the marriage and who therefore congratulated them.

"You are happy, Hetty?"

"Yes, Joseph; we may be married now. What is done will bring upon you all that can be brought."

"I have been thinking whether that would be true of you, Hetty."

"Joseph—when they searched your things, they found nothing, none of those proclamations from Russia, no copies, nothing which he could use against you?"

"Nothing, Hetty, I am sure. I have been very careful."

"But you have been so incautious in speech, dear Joseph. If they said that they had found proof of sedition, it would seem true!"

"Doubtless he will content himself with sending me at once to Flanders, Hetty."

"Oh, he would have, perhaps. Not now. Every squad of soldiers we see seems about to halt you."

"Do not think it, Hetty."

"Ah! There is another. See—they want you. . . . Yes; it is arrest! My Joseph!"

SHE caught up his hand and kissed it passionately as the soldiers stopped him. Joseph was put under arrest; the soldiers would not say by whose orders or for what. Possibly they did not know; but he was under arrest. They took him away; and Hetty stood alone in the street, surrounded at a little distance by strangers and friends who dared not even sympathize with her. Slowly she turned from the direction in which they had taken Joseph and went on to the house of her father.

He opened the door as she turned in. "Well," he cried to her, "well, how goes it? When will the wedding be?"

"Wedding! We shall never have any wedding, Father! You have killed Joseph! They have arrested him; they have taken him away. Oh, you have killed him, killed him!"

"I?" her father cried. "I—by posting that! Very well. I waited for that, but

I need not have waited! The voice of God! Ah, how it calls! How careless men may be! The other day, when he was here and before all this happened, Captain von Engel scribbled for me, to honor me, an order to come to the castle to report to him when my work was done. Well, it is done; and I have his passport! I take my results to him and his master!"

He stepped into his laboratory and took up a metal box; he put on cap and coat and mittens, and without other words, he went out.

It was the afternoon hour when, as was well known, it was His Majesty's custom to ride. This day was bright and fair; and Hetty, gazing up toward the Schloss, saw two horsemen coming down the stretch of bare road; they passed out of sight, and two more followed, and after them another pair. His Majesty was riding again! And Hetty knew what her father had entered the castle grounds to do. But for the moment, in her passion, all came to her as all had come to him.

She saw her brothers slain, butchered in battle, not in defense of the Fatherland but for the glory of the Prussian king! She saw her mother—sweet, patient, uncomplaining—slowly starved and dying in sacrifice to the Crown! She saw her father gassed, as he had gassed a hundred thousand French and English, in horrible holocaust to forward schemes of the royal house. She saw, not Rolf who had betrayed and ruined Luisa, but behind him and exhorting him, the royal state! She saw not only von Engel arresting Joseph and insulting and menacing her, but the High Command who "authorized and called upon" men and girls to debase and debauch each other. And for the moment all formed before her in the person of Authority itself—the face of the All Highest in helmet and uniform: His Majesty, the Kaiser, who had ordered or permitted all these things. And for that moment she wished her father to accomplish what he had gone to do.

Then hollowness seized her as she saw her father, having done it, punished; as she saw Joseph in jail accused for having part in it and condemned, hanged, for what he had cried out to her must not be done. And below and beneath all, there stirred through her now an instinct, born and bred in her blood and bone, for the safety and sanctity of His Majesty! And she had ceased to think or reason or feel.

HETTY ran to the gate to the grounds of the Schloss through which her father had been admitted. The soldier who had passed him refused to let her by. There was a telephone-box by which any imperative circumstance could be referred to the commander of the guard at the castle; the sentinel could telephone urgent matters; that was all he could do.

Thought of the trotting horses, ever approaching closer, terrified her; but here, before the sentinel, she could not accuse her father. A safer scheme for gaining entrance came to her—safer for her father, whatever it might prove for her.

"Send word at once to Captain von Engel," she ordered, "that Fräulein Hetty Stroebel must see him."

The soldier, having telephoned, stepped

back. "Captain von Engel is engaged present; but later doubtless he will be free. Proceed to the lodge."

Hetty went by. The way to the lodge led toward the road upon which His Majesty and his escort were riding. She ran as soon as she was out of sight of the guard; and she knew that her father could not be far ahead, because he could walk but slowly. He had proceeded slowly indeed, for now, after running a few minutes, she saw him.

He had stopped beside a tree to rest, she thought; but as she approached, she saw that he was not merely resting; he was waiting. Gone was the overmastering fury which had taken him to the Schloss grounds; he had spent it in some deed. He no longer carried the metal box which he had borne from the house; he was gazing upon the riding-path where it intersected the footway several yards beyond him; and he did not turn when Hetty called nor when she came up beside him.

"Be still!" was all he said when she spoke to him. "Be still; you interrupt my break in upon the voice of God. Listen; it is about to call—the voice of God. It is about to call him. Listen."

HE was listening, and so intently that Hetty was still and she listened too. She heard hoof-beats coming down the bridle-path—the hoofs of several horses galloping rapidly; and now the horses and their riders came in sight. They were the two who rode first; young officers of the guard, these were; they galloped past, their horses' hoofs kicking up the dry, powdery snow. Now the following riders came into sight, the stately stiff figure of Captain von Engel and beside him a shorter man on a larger horse, gray and commanding, unrelaxing and sternly gazing ahead.

"His Majesty!" Hetty cried, her heart pounding so that it choked her. "His Majesty!"

"It is the voice of God!" her father said beside her. He had gazed at His Majesty once also; but instantly his eyes had gone back to the path ahead where the fore-riders had galloped past; and Hetty, gazing over the snow, suddenly saw that her father's footprints had gone ahead to the riding-path at that point and then had returned; and where the footprints were, the light snow kicked up by the first horses seemed to hover over the ground as though the air had become heavier there and sustained the shimmering dust.

"Beware!" Hetty shouted, seeing him and running forward. "Stop! Beware! Your Majesty, beware!"

But the riders of the galloping horses did not hear or see her; they came on while a light gust of breeze lifted the shimmer in the air and took it toward them.

"See to yourselves! See to yourselves!" Hetty screamed as the horse upon which Captain von Engel rode stumbled and went to its knees; it neighed and trumpeted, rolling over while von Engel hurled himself to the ground. The horse upon which His Majesty rode was less swiftly affected; it galloped a length or two before it collapsed and went down.

*Your boy "over there"
will welcome—*



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trumpeting out its breath and throwing the figure of His Majesty prostrate.

HETTY had halted when they went down; and now her father was beside her, holding her and pulling her back.

"Stay away!" he wheezed to her. "Stay away! It is the gas! I made it; nothing can save them. The fore-riders broke the containers and stirred it from the path; these came upon it—all as I have planned! He will die!" Stroeel was thinking only of His Majesty now. "No one, I say, can save him. But he will not die at once; I have insured his moment to him to hearken—hearken to the voice of God and to witness the gathering of the phantoms, the phantoms of those whom he has tortured and killed, sad and beyond all number. See—see them gathering about him now. Do you not see them, Hetty?"

Her father stared about; beyond all doubt he witnessed them gathering—the innumerable phantoms of the men and women, old and young, the girls and boys and the babes, sad and beyond all number.

And for the instant that her father held her, Hetty seemed to see them too. But the man who had been flung from the great horse struggled up on his knees, and though he was dying, and though beyond all doubt he now knew it, he threw back his head proudly and without guilt. With a wrench of his body, as he rasped for breath, he put his hand upon his sword and knelt as one before his liege lord.

"It has come upon me, instead of upon Your Majesty!" he cried. "I die for you!" And he fell forward upon his face and did not move.

"The voice of God!" Stroeel cried out. "It came to him, but it brought him—only that! Only that!"

Beside the still form of His Majesty, the great horse had ceased to move; von Engel's horse too lay dead, and the form of von Engel was motionless upon the snow. But from the direction of the castle other riders appeared; and the fore-riders, who had gone far on, had turned and were coming back. They were the closest, and so Hetty ran to them.

"It is gas—gas which has killed him. It is upon the ground about there. It will not go close!" she cried to the two officers who returned.

But her father, in spite of the warning which he first had given her, now had crept up to the forms on the ground. Whether he believed that the gas already might have cleared, or whether now he was reckless of it, Hetty could not tell. But he went up and bent over the form of the man who died with his hand on his sword.

He threw back the long cape from over the left side, and he stooped and stared closely at the face.

"The left arm!" Stroeel's voice screamed. "It is sound; and the sound is under the eye; it is pain! This is pain! It is only an actor! The voice of God, I have called it to this!" And he fell forward on his hands and knees to the ground. "But at least," he cried out, "at least, von Engel is dead. Hetty, Liebchen, at least I have saved you from von Engel—for Joseph, when he comes back—and revolution comes!"

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

(Continued from page 80)

that he had gathered from ill-fated ships into his possession.

Captain Bill read it in their faces as he measured them, man by man, and by that keen judgment was satisfied. It was the Englishman who gave the best strategy of all.

"I suggest that we wait until she starts her engines," he said. "They are abaft these cabins. Their noise will help to smother the breaking of the door, and some of her men will not be alarmed. If it gives quickly, some of us will be out in the companionway before anyone can come. If there is a guard, we must get him as soon as we can. What do you suggest, Captain Main?"

"That two of us stop to get the guard if there is one, that two of us go to nab the brute who masters this craft, and two more tackle the engine-room. I should like to be the one to get the commander. Probably we can find something in his cabin to arm ourselves with. But we must grab anything with which to kill. Is that agreed? Good! Then you, Captain Blake, will lead the party to the engine-room. I'll take Captain Olesen with me. Captains Murdock and Escouffaire will care for the guard at the door. Captain Olesen, being the heaviest of us all, will help me smash it out. The others of you are to get behind and use us as battering-rams."

They paused, perturbed, that he should thus suggest that they use their united strength to smash their fellow-beings against that barricade. It might not give. It might prove proof against their strength. But he gruffly asserted his position.

"You've said that I'm to be in command. Well, I accepted. It goes. I command by your leave. I say that you're to use Olesen and me as battering-rams. Now all we do is to wait for the noise of the engines."

THEY had not long to wait, but to men strung up and waiting for battle the time dragged. They had stripped according to individual fancy. The captain of the British liner took off his coat and carefully folded it as if to preserve it immaculate, but rolled up his sleeves. The French master stripped to his undershirt, and Olesen followed the grim example of Captain Bill, who divested himself of everything save his trousers and tightened his belt around his lean waist.

They were strangely unlike as they stood there with naked torsos, the one muscled like a huge gladiator, the other with long folds of thew and sinew sweeping downward and around his lean ribs. All were barefooted or in stocking-feet. Even their whispering ceased, and they stood silent, some of them doubtless reflecting of things far remote, past events, and distant ties, as men do think when confronted with the final curtain of life's drama. They stared into one another's eyes when the first hum of driven dynamos suddenly pervaded the stillness, arose to a throbbing monotone and told them that this was the time to act.

Captain Bill took his place in the front, with Captain Olesen half behind and half abreast.

"When I say go," ordered the adventurer, "you men are to drive us hard! Hard, I say! No mercy for these bodies of ours. If they break or bruise, it doesn't matter, if you succeed in smashing the door at the first blow. Ready? Now!"

From the back end of the tiny compartment, hurled by their own momentum and the desperately exerted strength of those behind, like a living solidified catapult, the six men shot forward against the door. They felt the giving of flesh, the straining of joints, the rending of impact—and heard triumphantly the crashing of wood as the barrier gave way, a mass of

splintered wood. They brought up in the wreckage against the steel wall of the doorway on the opposite side. They heard a cry of wild alarm, and under the light saw a flash of steel as the guard attempted to use the short sword-bayonet with which he was armed. The captain of the liner seized it with one naked hand regardless of an edge that cut to the bone, and with a trained fist caught the man a blow beneath the chin that would have broken a neck less sturdy. And then he tore the bayonet from the relaxing hand, and before the guard had fallen limply to the floor, was charging toward the engine-room.

Captains Bill and Olesen, regardless of a hundred bruises and splinter-wounds, ran forward. The German commander, alarmed, met them at the door with pistol in hand and fired. The bullet grazed Captain Bill's head, and a stream of blood spurted outward, but he caught the barrel of the pistol in his hand and directed its muzzle upward so that the second shot struck the steel roof above and spattered lead about them as it fell. They twisted back and forth, powerfully. From forward, men were rushing to the commander's assistance.

Time itself seemed against success in the sturdy resistance of the German, who threatened to delay a conclusion until he could be supported. Captain Bill made a desperate swerve, took advantage of the open doorway and succeeded in swinging the commander half around, thus giving Olesen room to act. The latter promptly brought both huge fists smashing beneath the commander's ears, and then savagely struck again as he fell.

"Out of my way! Give me room!" he shouted to Captain Bill who had gained the pistol and now fell backward into the open doorway. The Dane fought as if from atavistic depths the soul of a Viking had come to his aid. He seized the

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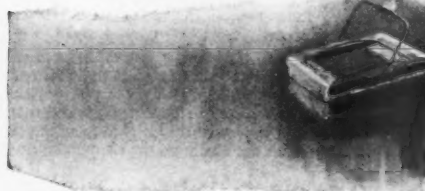
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conscious body of the commander, lifted it high in his mighty arms, and using it as a heavy shield, charged full at the oncoming men of the U-boat's crew. He swept into them, a giant maddened with battle-lust, shouting strange roaring cries of battle. And as the foremost fell, he trampled them beneath his bare feet in his onward charge.

One of the fallen men gained his feet with agile speed and started to draw a knife. Captain Bill's pistol was fired at such close range that the man's brains were spattered over the walls. Then Captain Bill leaped close behind the broad back of the Berserker and fired over the straining shoulder. A man in front screamed and fell. In the face of such demoniacal onslaught the others turned and fought to retreat down the narrow space. Captain Bill wriggled under the giant's arm and fired again with the certainty of a master of firearms, and a hand as cool, steady and deadly as a life's training of adventure had made.

"Stop! Stand where you are, or I'll kill you one by one," he shouted; but they did not understand, and the Dane roared a translation into German, adding in the same tongue: "Up with your hands! Quick!"

The men, confused by the lack of a leader, terrified by the surety of death, obeyed. The Viking, breathing heavily, dropped his shield to the floor and callously put a foot on the commander's upturned face to assure the officer's continued insensibility.

"Let me in front, Olesen," ordered Captain Bill; and holding the mer steadily under the point of his weapon, he added: "Now you go back and see if there are any other arms in the commander's cabin. Hurry!"

There was but a moment's wait before Olesen returned with another revolver and a dress sword; but in that moment Captain Bill was fearfully aware that the motors had stopped and that the engine-room was resonant with the sound of screams and oaths of battle. One of the men in the companionway, encouraged by the sounds, dropped his hands and started to spring toward Captain Bill, who calmly killed him and shouted an invitation for another man to make a try.

"Tell them to come back one by one. You search them as they come, and herd them into the commander's cabin," he said to Olesen, who instantly translated the order. Captain Bill stepped into a side recess and threatened them as they passed. From the side of his eye he saw that Olesen was evidently conducting his search inside the cabin and did not know until the last man visible, the sixth, had duly entered, that the Viking's method of search was to stand just inside the door and knock each man down as he appeared. Captain Bill growled a remonstrance and left Olesen on guard.

He ran back to the engine-room, where the noise had all but subsided, in time to see that one of his own force lay upon the floor still and inert, that another sat rocking dizzily and holding his head, and that the captain of the liner was having a desperate struggle over and across the motors with a burly German engineer. He was rushing forward to assist, when from behind one of the motors appeared the

French master dripping with the red of conflict and wounds. Before Captain Bill could shout a protest, he saw the Frenchman, swift as light, bring a huge spanner crashing down on the German's head. The battle in the engine-room was done.

"Thank you, M'sieur le Capitaine! Very well done indeed," said the Englishman as calmly as if throughout all the ordeal he had remained mentally unruffled. "For a slight time, Captain Main, we found it a bit difficult here," he explained, deliberately removing the remnants of his collar and tie. "A spanner was thrown in time to knock down Captain Ware as we entered; Captain Murdock was struck from behind and knocked out, and Monsieur Escouffaire and I were compelled to engage four very good men. Very good, indeed! I fear you will find one of them somewhat mixed up with the engines; one is here, as you see; another should be down there between the dynamos; and—I'll be blessed if I know where the other is."

"Heem I am standing on," explained Monsieur Escouffaire. "He is *hors de combat* by zee assestance of zees span-nair."

"Take this gun and watch 'em, Captain," said Captain Bill, handing the Frenchman his pistol. "Don't kill any more if you can avoid it. Captain Blake and I will search the ship."

They found two other men hiding in the forward recesses of the boat and brought them aft. They made certain of subjection by binding the hands of those they could not confine separately; and then in the strange stillness succeeding the battle they took stock of their own wounds. One of the masters of lost ships was dead, and of the others there was not one but sustained bruises and wounds. They ministered to one another as best they could, all masters of crude surgery. Then they fell to the grim task of laying the dead in the only available open space. The silence of the depths surrounded them uncannily, as if their battle had been fought in the funeral heart of a steel morgue that had resumed its awesome peace.

CAPTAIN BILL was made aware of his responsibilities by the voice of Olesen announcing that the commander of the conquered craft had regained consciousness.

"Shall I hit him again?" the Viking questioned, as if his desire for reprisals had not been fully sated.

"Certainly not," replied Captain Bill. For an instant he was puzzled what to do; then he recalled what to him was the most vital issue of all.

"Captain," he said, addressing the Englishman, "can you bring her to the surface?"

"I can, provided some of you men can man the engines, or we can compel the engineer to work," was the answer.

"Then," said Captain Bill, "I'd like to go to the surface and find my men. They are—"

He paused as if afraid of displaying sentiment, but the Englishman nodded gravely and said: "I understand. We'll try."

From the depths of dark, cold waters

to the depths of a dark gray morning the submarine arose, and Captain Bill cumbered out through the conning-tower hatch and anxiously scanned the sullen, threatening wastes about him.

"I can't see them! I can't see them!" he said almost in a moan, to the captain of the liner, who had followed close on his heels.

"Looks bad," admitted the latter, peering this way and that through a pair of binoculars. "And the glass is falling like a shot. Shall we cruise a circle? I'll take the controls below."

"Good," said Captain Bill; and he was left with the French master to assist him on the lookout.

The U-boat tossed and rocked desperately when she took cross-seas, straightened to a half-easy keel when she ran into them or with them astern, and wallowed when buffeted on her turnings. She bucked and plunged, twisted and wriggled, threw wash and spume and spray; but the two men clinging to the tiny railed inclosure above her conning-tower never faltered in their quest. To the French master came the honor of discovery. Out on the lifted edge of the world his keen eyes descried a mere spot that arose on the crest of a larger wave and then dropped swiftly from sight.

Now the submarine altered her course and with almost reckless speed for such seas bore down upon the point. The boats were pulling sullenly and doggedly with bows on to meet oncoming seas, quite as if recognizing the futility of the struggle but determined to die gamely. Their crews now and then shook a fist and cursed the oncoming casket of steel that had brought them to this desperate situation; but the curses gave way to wild cheers of relief and astonishment when they identified Captain Bill on the bridge. With heavy difficulty they succeeded in coming aboard, the low, exposed portion of the U-boat's hull offering but a small lee protection against the sea.

"Pay off the lines on those boats and hold them there," ordered Captain Bill. Then he went below.

"Captain Olesen," he called, "how are the prisoners now?"

"They've all come around all right," replied the Viking with a grin, and Captain Bill stalked into the cabin where the German commander was confined. The Hun ceased objurgations to stare haughtily at his conqueror.

"Get on your heaviest clothing," ordered Captain Bill, and he added grimly: "You'll need it. You and your crew are going for a cruise. We've picked up my boats."

For an instant the German's eyes opened wide, and his lips parted as if they were unable to enunciate his thoughts. Slowly his insolent stare changed to one of desperate terror.

"Herr Gott! You mean—you don't mean you are going to put us adrift in your boats?"

"Exactly that!"

"But—Himmel, man! Have some mercy. That is murder."

"That is what I said to you an hour or two ago. You laughed. Murder? You call it that now, eh? Then, curse you, I'll tell you this: It doesn't make the slightest difference to me if it is. All

I know is that I've got thirty-two men to cram inside this craft, that the life or any one of them is worth more to me than yours and those of your entire crew, that it's impossible to stow them aboard without getting rid of you and yours, that when you and yours came to sea you took the chances, and—you showed no mercy, and none shall be given. Get your coat if you want it. If not, I'll have you hauled on deck as you are. It's just a coat more than you allowed my men a chance to get when they took to the water."

CAPTAIN BILL stalked out to arrange for an equal indulgence to his other prisoners, and ordered some cases of stimulant he had discovered in the storeroom during his first search carried up and put into the boats. The captain of the liner was the only one of his fellows who voiced a single word of regret.

"It's a pity," he said sadly, "that we have to do it; but it's their lives or those of your men. You are doing all you possibly could do, Captain Main; and yet—"

The eyes that were turned on him gleamed coldly, and with no warmth of either compassion or regret. The liner-man closed his lips but finished mentally: "God spare me from having an enemy such as this!"

There were pleas for mercy, implorations and curses from those who were launched. The terrors heartlessly meted to others had come home to them with sickening and unexpected justice. They fell to helpless, hopeless silence when the last of their men was put aboard the rocking, spray-washed boat under the storm-driven skies. Captain Bill gave the orders that sent all men aboard the U-boat below preparatory to submergence to less buffeting waters. The commander of the U-boat aroused himself from his terrified dejection long enough to shout a final objurgation. It was caught by the wind and whirled idly away.

"Curse if you wish," Captain Bill shouted in reply. "I've shown more mercy than your people showed women and babies on the *Lusitania* and a thousand other ships. Good-by! And may Heaven have mercy on your souls!"

He went below. There came the clang of closing hatches. The waves seemed to climb upward and embrace the steel hull. The water swirled for a moment over a tiny spot on the surface of the sea where it had submerged, and the waves washed this momentary mark clean with one fierce sweep. That was all!

A few days later an official in a great admiralty office read a telegraphed report from a tiny port where a captured German submarine had been brought in and turned over to the port commander. He read it again as if too astonished by its contents to glean its full import in one reading, and then laid it on his desk and exclaimed, "God bless my soul!"

Out on the Atlantic a tempest had subsided, and the long swells were again running with lazy regularity, heedless of the knowledge contained in their depths—a certainty of knowledge that others than the sea might never know where and how two laden boats came to their end; for they made no earthly port.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN (Continued from page 56)

clothes to receive the gorgeous von Bissing, with helmet gleaming, decorations radiant and saber knocking on the floor.

Mrs. Whitlock came in, and Mrs. Lucey, Mr. Vernon Kellogg and Mr. Hugh Gibson and others to be presented to General Baron von Bissing and the Military Governor of Brussels, General Baron von Kraewel, and their gorgeous retinues.

They were met under the truce of afternoon tea, and there was nothing visible or audible to hint that the Americans regarded the Germans as monsters of ravin who must be stroked and kept purring for the sake of the prey in their claws—nor that the Germans regarded the Americans as fussy meddlesome old ladies who must be humored for the time being, till the more urgent business of conquest was finished.

Dimny was so much impressed by the gracious geniality of von Bissing's long level smile under his mustache that she resolved to throw herself on his mercy, assured that he had an abundance of it. He was very old; he had overdrawn already on his three score and ten, but he looked gentle and kindly.

She advanced toward him, told him glibly that she had a great favor to ask him, for the sake of his own people; and he invited her to call at headquarters the following morning. He wrote her a pass on a card and gave it to her.

Then the farewells were in order, an odd mingling of martial and social formalities.

When the helmets and the bemedaled bosoms were gone, the Americans relaxed with a sigh of homelike comfort.

"What a very nice old dragon he is!" Dimny exclaimed. "I didn't know that Prussians could be so—so velvety."

THE next morning Dimny found her way to the office of the Governor General, after asking and being asked many questions, and joined the throng in the anteroom. She heard the voice of a furious old man piercing the door with its childish treble, and by and by the door was thrown open and General von Bissing himself appeared there, driving out a confused and stammering wretch in uniform.

The officers and soldiers in attendance leaped to their feet and clicked their heels so smartly that Dimny automatically imitated them. The sight of her with hand to brow caught von Bissing and melted him slightly. He stared, bowed, and motioned her to enter while he finished off his victim.

Colonel Klemm had wished that Dimny should see him in uniform, hoping that the glorious sight would waken her memory of him. But he had not counted on her seeing him undergo an official spanking. He recognized her as she passed through the door, and was glad that she did not recognize him. He kept bowing, saluting, stammering, till von Bissing turned his back on him. Then he fled while the Governor General slammed the door on himself and Dimny.

Von Bissing was still muttering. He justified his wrath by tossing on the table in front of Dimny's eye a copy of *La Libre Belgique*, the one uncensored journal in Belgium. Dimny had heard a little of its surreptitious publication, in cellars, garages and other brief resting-places.

The Germans had sought high and low for its editors and printers—raiding, offering rewards and setting the whole force of a thousand spies upon its elusive trail. But somehow it kept on appearing, and so ingeniously were its publishers that according to popular tradition, a copy of every issue was promptly placed on von Bissing's desk. Not to catch the publishers was bad enough, but to find the paper magically smuggled into the impervious headquarters was maddening.

A telephone-call from Berlin, apparently from the Kaiser himself, kept von Bissing busy and as deferential as a lackey, while Dimny scanned the offending copy of *La Libre Belgique*.

The crowning satire of this issue was a doctored photograph of von Bissing with a copy of the paper itself in his hand, and beneath it a legend: "Our dear Governor, disheartened by reading the lies of the censored journals, seeks the truth in *LA LIBRE BELGIQUE*." It was this that had strangled von Bissing with fury at his inept secret police. The burden of his ire had fallen on Lieutenant Colonel Klemm, who had been instructed to leave the publisher's head or his own on von Bissing's desk.

WHEN von Bissing had finished speaking to the distant royal master whose priest he was proud to be, he proffered Dimny a chair and announced himself at her service. She spoke with a double timidity of foreign syntax and of the despot whose word could soothe or break so many hearts. Remembering how Lieutenant Colonel Klemm's face had darkened at her appeal for the English girls, she approached the subject from another angle, as she had rehearsed it in her room at the Palace Hotel.

"I come to ask His Excellency to do a great kindness to many German mothers," she began in slow French. He lifted his eyebrows in polite interest. She went on:

"They are too brave to mourn for the sons who are absent fighting for their Fatherland. But some of them are less calm, since they mourn for lost daughters instead of sons."

Von Bissing was puzzled: "Lost daughters?" he echoed.

"Yes, Excellency. On my way from America I had to pass through England." Von Bissing saluted the hateful word with a grunt. "I learned that there are numbers of young German women in England who are not permitted to go home. Their mothers do not even know if they are alive or in prison or where."

Von Bissing nodded and murmured a prayer that *Gott* would *strafe* England. Dimny continued:

"It seems to me a great pity that the

poor young girls should be left in a hostile country."

"A pity! A crime!" said von Bissing. "But how to get them home?"

He had walked into her amiable snare. She drew the cord.

"The English will send them back on one condition—"

"England makes conditions!" he sneered.

"That they receive in exchange an equal number of English girls who are held in Belgium."

Von Bissing's sly soul paid her the tribute of a foxy smile. He acknowledged the cord, but it was a frail one.

"Very neatly managed, my dear," he laughed. "You came in at the back door. You wish to save English girls, but you approach me by my tender side. But it is hard to be clever without being too clever," he went on. "I could have you arrested as a secret agent for England. Men and women have been shot in batches on less evidence."

Dimny's shock at his abrupt reversal to type left her no thought of her own peril.

"Excellency!" she gasped. "What harm could it be to Germany to exchange a few girls for a few girls?"

"What harm?" he raged. "Either you are too innocent to be abroad, or you think I am. Those English do not want these girls because they love them. What do their hard hearts know of *der Heimat* and of *der Familienliebe*? No, those English swine want those girls for exhibition."

"For exhibition?"

"Yes, as proof of the atrocities they accuse us of. They want to show them and prove to the world what beasts we are."

Dimny started an ironical "But there haven't been any atrocities, have there?" But she feared to tamper with his wrath, and simply explained:

"But these girls are all unharmed."

He whirled on her with a surprise more eloquent than documents. "Unharmed? These girls are intact?"

"All of those that I have found. They have been frightened, of course, and some of them have lost their clothes and their money and their wits, but they are in other convents and getting along well enough."

VON BISSING exulted over the discovery. He was grateful to Dimny for bringing him specimens of a sort that would redound to German credit. He did not realize the true horror of the implication. A few girls were unharmed and as he said, "intact," and they made an important exhibit in the defense of Germany from the indictment of the world—though it was harking back to the Irish alibi of the prisoner who was confronted with ten men who had seen him kill a man, and offered to produce a hundred who had not.

Von Bissing put the brake on his racing delight and said:

"Well, perhaps it would do no harm



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to send these girls back. It would rid Belgium of the expense of feeding them. I am inclined to grant you this favor, since you ask it so prettily and since it means the rescue of certain poor German girls. Besides, they may bring back a little useful information," he chuckled—then caught himself again. "How many girls are there, my dear?"

"I have here the names of only half a dozen that have been found. But the others are being searched for by Oberstleutnant Klemm."

Von Bissing roared the name in angry wonder. Dimny did not know why. She simply went on:

"He promised to furnish me with all of the addresses very soon."

Von Bissing yanked his mustache.

"Perhaps that was what diverted the cabbagehead from chasing the publishers of *La Libre Belgique*."

"I beg your pardon, Excellency?"

"No matter! Well, you have done the man a favor. I will spare him once more and return him to your service. Since he has been in attendance upon so fair a lady, he must be forgiven much."

He lifted her hand and kissed it. She managed to keep from shivering visibly. The telephone-bell rang. He grew brusque.

"Run along now, my child, and I will send this Klemmschwein to you."

Dimny stood a moment in the ante-room with tears burning her eyes because she had not interceded for her mother and her sister. Then she remembered how harshly von Bissing had refused to repatriate the English schoolgirls until he had found that they could be safely returned. What answer would be given if Dimny asked for the release of Alice and her mother in their damned and damning estate? She felt that she had only raised up a new foe who could construct obstacles by magic.

She hurried away from the baleful castle of despair and felt more baffled than ever. Her new instinct led her to seek Noll Winsor. He was helpless, but he liked her, and she liked him—oh, ever so much.

CHAPTER XLVIII

AS Dimny returned to the Palace Hotel, she noted that an officer in uniform passed her, stared, hesitated, dropped back, stared again, hurried ahead, turned back and paused in her path. Women do not reach Dimny's age without having a good many experiences of the sort; she pretended to ignore the pertinacity of this man, secure in her belief that she did not know any German officers. She walked round him, looked past him or through him and went her way.

At length the officer hove alongside and spoke:

"Goot efternoons, Mees Parcot."

The familiar voice startled her, as well as the sound of her name in Brussels streets. She stopped short and looked up—then moved on. Her escort followed.

"You ton't know me, I guess. I am Oberstleutnant Klemm."

She greeted him now with cordiality, for she wanted to see him.

"Oh, how do you do! I didn't know you in all that get-up."

He was puzzled. Believing her Alice, he said:

"But it was so you see me de feerst time."

She understood that he was recurring to his memory of Alice, and she did not want to undeceive him yet.

"Oh yes, of course," she faltered.

That satisfied him for the moment.

"I am more glet to see you as ever. I am owink to you a great kintness."

"Really? What is it?"

"Can we go by your hotel and make a little talkink? I have dose lists of names and attresses."

She nodded, and he marched alongside, explaining how he had got into von Bissing's bad books and how she had got him out. His heart was genuinely warming toward her now. She had proved herself useful.

WHEN they were seated in one of the lounging-rooms of the Palace Hotel, he took from his pocket the names of the English girls. He had found in his researches the names of many more than she had brought—eighty-six girls in all, and scattered through twenty towns and villages.

He explained the steps that must be taken for the securing of passports, the photographing of each girl so that her portrait might adorn her passport, the delivery of the girls across the frontier into Holland, and the reception of their equivalent in German maidenhood. He promised to take all of that work off her hands.

The same steps would have to be carried out in England for each of the German daughters. Dimny told him that Mr. Winsor had already arranged the preliminaries through Mr. Skelton of the C. R. B.

They were getting along famously well with their plans when Noll came upon the scene. He saw them before they saw him. He saw a German officer talking rapidly and gaily to his Dimny, saw her listening with laughter in her eyes and friendship in her smile. Noll could not imagine that the boche was telling her of his encounter with a dear old Belgian Mother Superior who suspected him of fell designs on the English charges whose release he was honestly trying to arrange.

Dimny understood why the nun should distrust anything in field-gray, but she was amused by Klemm's imitation of his own endeavors.

"She treated me like I am a housegoer—vot you call a peddler."

Dimny laughed at the picture he made, the terrorizer terrified; as she laughed she glanced past his shoulder and saw Noll, darkening into an *Othello* with jealousy. Dimny was flattered by that anger of his, but she was too solemn a little body nowadays to take pleasure in tormenting even a lover. Her smile died in a stare, and Klemm, noting the change, followed the line of her gaze and turning, saw Noll Winsor in the offing.

KLEMM recognized him at once as the courier of the C. R. B. and remembered at once his imprudence at Esschen.

He was furious at him for two months his past dereliction and his present intrusion.

Dimny had heard Noll express his opinion of Klemm in vigorous terms. He dreaded a clash now, and while she thought that Noll had nothing to fear in a gle combat, she knew that Klemm several German army corps behind him. Even Noll could not whip them all single-handed. In her alarm she mumbled:

"You two have met, haven't you?"

Both nodded in grim silence. They tried to kindle a little conversation.

"Colonel Klemm was just telling me," she said, "how he besieged a convent how he threw the old Mother Superior into a state of nerves." She laughed courageously, but Noll growled:

"*Jedes Tierchen hat sein Plaisir*."

Klemm drew himself up in wrath, but Dimny said:

"And what might that mean?"

"Every little beast has his little bit of his little pet amusement, you might say. Scaring nuns seems to be the favorite door sport of certain—"

Dimny talked rapidly through the last words with a frantic effort to stall a clash.

"Where on earth did you hear that quaint expression?"

"Oh, my mother used to say it!"

"Your mother?"

"Yes—she was German, you know. No, I didn't know." Dimny said this with all the tragedy of a Juliet knowing that her *Romeo* was a *Montague*.

But Klemm was startled out of his wrath by the surprise of Noll's admission. He turned to Noll with a host of questions in German which Noll answered fluently but angrily.

Klemm complimented him on his idioms. They were old-fashioned, he said and spoken with a ghastly American accent—not at all with the fashionable *Berlinese*. Yet they were not phrases a foreigner learns by rote in a text-book.

A new idea fermented suddenly in Klemm's brain. Perhaps he could use Noll to advantage, to the advantage of himself as well as of the Fatherland. A great campaign of spies was being organized in the United States. Klemm had been hoping for an assignment there. Here was perhaps a ready-made assistant, one who might be made a partner and a servant, too, like a blind man's dog.

EVENTUALLY Klemm took his leave promising to call upon Noll when he had finished Miss Parcot's business. And now Noll found that a faint change had come upon the spirit of Dimny's manner toward him. It was indefinable like a little shapeless mist that could not be seized nor yet ignored. He was at last:

"Does it make a difference to you if I am part German?"

"Oh, no—oh, no!" she sighed with reluctance that meant, "Oh, yes, yes!" She added: "You couldn't be that, could you?"

He laughed bitterly. "When I leave about it, it was too late to change." He felt a kind of disloyalty to his mother in the flippancy of his manner, but

ould not lift himself by his own boot-
raps to the height of defending that side
his heritage. He managed to say:
"It doesn't make much difference what
man's blood is; it's his heart that counts.
The Kaiser is half English, you know,
and it didn't seem to help him much."
He left the twisted argument for her
untangle as she pleased. He felt sud-
denly quite banished, very much without
her. He made a last plea for himself.
"My grandfather fought for the Union,
and there were plenty of Germans in the
revolutionary War. There was old
Luhlenberg, for one, the preacher who
wore his uniform into the pulpit and led
regiment away."
"But he was fighting the English,"
Dimmy put in, regretting her helpless
denation from Noll.
"No, he was fighting the German king
of England. George was a Hanoverian,
you know, and a rotten tyrant."
"Still, it was different," she murmured.
"Of course it was," he cried, "but there
were plenty of Englishmen in America
men who fought against England in '76;
and there'll be thousands of Germans in
America who will fight against the Kaiser
in 19—, whenever this war reaches us,
the next one, for the Kaiser and Uncle
Sam have got to fight it out sooner or
later, and the sooner we begin to com-
mence, the sooner it's over."
Dimmy stared at him with amazement.
"You really want to see the Kaiser
shipped?"
"Of course! I want to see him in
Alba or St. Helena. I'm ashamed to live
in a world that lets a divine monarch strut
around. If his own people don't chuck
him overboard themselves, then we've
got to help."
"Do you think there's any hope of his
own people?"
"Not much. They've been caught too
young. They've been poisoned from the
cradle. They've been brought up to speak
of the crown with such reverence that
they believe it's sacred. They'd blush
with shame to be caught in a lese-ma-
jesty."
"I remember my cousin who came over
from Germany to visit us. He was a
very decent young cub—Duhr, his name
was, Nazi Duhr. He had a good sense
of humor and plenty of brains, till we
spoke a little flippantly of his Kaiser;
and then he was a good deal like an in-
cultured priest."
"By the way, he might be of help. If
your mother and sister are interned in
Germany, he could help us to find them.
I promised my mother I would go to Ger-
many and see her sister. I sent her some
money when she wrote that she was
hungry. They'd feel under obligations.
It would be a good excuse for me to get
a passport. And once inside the lines, I
could travel about, all right. There are
many number of Americans in Germany.
Our ambassador is there. He could help.
Why haven't I thought of it? Germany
is the place to go. You could come along.
I could call you my cousin, or some-
thing."
Noll was aglow with enthusiasm, but
Dimmy was not catching fire. She had
not recovered yet from the shock of
learning that Noll was in part a German
and had relatives in Germany and was
going to make an ally of a certain Ger-



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man officer. She could not glow at this. She said:

"What regiment does your cousin belong to?"

"I don't know the number," Noll said, "but it was one of the Thuringian—"

Dimny screamed aloud at that word. It had haunted her for months. It was the only name in her sister's letter. She did not know that Noll had awakened her once with it from her sleep in Carthage, to a delirium that she had never recalled.

It struck her like a lightning in her gloom. It startled Noll to hear it from his own lips. In the confusion of his self-defense and his joy at the thought of making a confederate of Nazi Duhr, he had forgotten what the word *Thuringian* meant to Dimny.

To cover his own hateful knowledge of her letter now, he asked her why she screamed, but she would not explain. She merely bade him good-by and started for her room.

CHAPTER XLIX

AT this very moment Dimny's sister and mother were talking of her in Louvain. There was no weird coincidence in that, for they were almost always talking of her. They wondered where she was and how she was, and if she had ever received their letter, and whether they ought to have written it, and whether they ought not to write another and tell her not to worry about them, since they were at peace.

And they were at peace—of a sort; for they had grown used to their fate and resigned to their condition.

As dusk drew on, they put away their sewing and went out for their daily walk. They preferred not to go abroad in the full light. They had the American woman's timidity at such a time, and with better reason than usual, for they had no husbands to walk with them and take pride in their promise.

They left the wooden shed that had been hastily built among the ruins of the Tudesq houses and moved up the Rue des Joyeuses Entrées, which becomes the Rue Vanderhelen, past the Place du Peuple, and among obscure rubbish that had been homes. Then they passed through the Rue de la Station, one long eyesore of devastation.

As they trudged slowly along, a line of soldiers from Liège marched by. Alice and her mother were used to soldiers. They were always marching in from the east, gay and brisk with bands playing and uniforms fresh, for they were on their way to battle. They were always marching in from the west, slow and limping and shabby, without music, after the battle.

Sometimes the men in the ranks would shout at and ridicule the two women, but they paid no heed. And so when now they heard a voice crying out at them, they did not even look. They hardly realized that a voice had risen from the dull surf of marching feet till a young officer darted from the ranks and ran to them. He seized Alice by the arm and stared into her face.

She recoiled and looked at him in

amazement. He spoke to her excitedly in German, but she did not understand a word he said. Then there came an angry yell from an officer in the passing column, and it dragged the youth again into the line as if with a lasso.

He cried back at her: "*Auf Wiedersehen!*" and she lost sight of him as he ran along the flank seeking his place.

Alice and her mother stood wondering. Neither of them recalled the young man. They spoke of him with bewilderment, then gave him up as unexplainable.

The next day they avoided that street and sauntered through the old marketplace as one saunters a sadly cherished graveyard. There Alice was again accosted by the same young officer. He spoke to her again in German, but she shook her head and moved on. He followed and kept at her elbow. There was nobody to appeal to for protection, for the Louvaine had learned too well not to resist anything, and the soldiers they passed would not have come to their aid.

AT length the young man essayed English.

"You have by Dofnay been, yes?"

The shock of fright the word sent through Alice was answer enough to that. He went on excitedly:

"*Ich auch*—me besides, I was there. I did see you there. I did come to *Kloster*—to convent—not alone, but—you are remembering of me now, yes?"

Alice trembled as if she were freezing in a sleet of icy memories. He could not tell whether her head shook in denial or only in the agony of torment.

"I did hoped you should remember me, for I cannot forget of you. I was very bad against you, but after ven I am in battles, I beg *Gott* to make me dead. At last His good bullet finds me, but I do not died. They send me to my home to die. I live yet.

"But I have sisters, two sisters, and a goot Mutter, and I think always where are you. My body gets sound already, but *meine Seele*—*meine* soul is sick. I ditt prayed *Gott* He should bringk me to you, and so now He does. For few days I goink rest by here. I shall come to see you, yes? Now you are remembering me—Leutnant Duhr my name is, Ignatius Duhr—Nazi, I am called. I did telled you my name in Dofnay ven you are in my arms. Now you are remembering, yes? No? *In Gottes Namen*, don't say no!"

"No!" she groaned. She cried it aloud again. "No!" and again "No!"

And it seemed that fate had invented a pluperfect torture in recalling from oblivion this haggard youth and bringing with him no memory to reestablish him even among her loathings. He was weak too, from his old wound, and his eyes were the windows of a haunted house. The furies of remorse were about him, and he had fled to her of all people for pity and shelter. And she could not even deny the claim he made upon her. She did not remember him at all. And if she could have remembered him—what then?

She moved slowly away from him. He did not seize hold of her, but followed at a distance like a lonely hound. When he saw where she and her mother lived,

he stared a long while, then turned and walked back to the house where he was billeted.

CHAPTER L

AS Noll was about to leave the house after his luckless mention of Nazi Duhr and the Thuringians to Dimny, he carried such freight of sympathy in his head that he did not see Colonel Klemm beckoning to him, nor hear his voice. Klemm hastened to catch him by the elbow and murmur a "*Bitte, mein Herr, Auf ein Wort.*"

Noll looked at him with a startled and surly "Well?" Klemm's face was wreathed with smiles in spite of the buff. He pleaded.

"*Haben Sie Lust spazieren zu gehen?*" "Take a walk? With you? Why?" Noll answered bluntly.

Klemm begged him to speak German and to be assured that what was to be said was for Noll's own good. Noll felt that there was something in the wind, and curiosity overbore his antipathy. He consented to walk with Klemm, who explained that he spoke in strict confidence and that the best place to discuss a serious matter was in the open.

Noll went along uneasily. Klemm linked arms with him, keeping his right hand free to return the incessant salutes of the passing soldiers. Noll shared the glory, such as it was, but he noted that the Belgians he passed stared at him with amazement and suspicion. He felt that he deserved both—and worse.

Klemm led him about the Place Charles Rogier in the roped-off space where Brussels citizens were now forbidden to promenade. After some laboriously casual small-talk, Klemm began to discuss America.

He spoke of it with envy as the land of ease and of easy wealth, of abundant food and comfortable hotels, a paradise nowadays, while Europe was a hell. He thought it strange that Herr Vinsor should have left so comfortable a place without compulsion. He must be very rich and in search of new sensations.

Noll protested that he was not rich, but poor; and that he did not like the sensations he was getting. Klemm grew very sympathetic in his tone. He regretted bitterly that Belgium had to be invaded, but it was war-times, and "necessity breaks iron."

He was sorry to hear that Noll was not rich, but he was glad that he was not getting rich by making bullets to kill poor Germans. He asked Noll how his sympathies were; and Noll, remembering his promises not to offend the conquerors, answered diplomatically.

Klemm spoke of England's tyranny and the way that Germany was hampered in her development. He resorted to America and said that he had been hoping for an assignment thither on diplomatic business and for the encouragement of the great German element. He raged against the English propaganda and pleaded that it was perfectly proper for Germany to fight England in America or anywhere—to destroy bridges and munitions-factories, scatter false rumors, threaten Congressmen with political raids and encourage pacifism.

This was strong meat for Noll to stomach, but he kept his temper, for he saw that Klemm had an ulterior purpose. He brought Klemm up at length with a sudden, "What's the short idea in this long lecture?"

Now convinced that Noll was fallow for the seeds of conversion, Klemm began to scatter hints that Germany needed the help of her sons across the sea, and of all those who had the sacred blood of Teutonism in their arteries. There was a great work for Noll, if he were ready for it.

NOLL'S heart knocked against his ribs. He had not foreseen this.

"I don't quite understand," he faltered.

"Deutschland needs you. *Deutschtum* needs you. *Kultur* needs you more there than here. You can do more good for the cause of civilization in America than in Belgium. Let these pro-British Yankees feed the Belgian swine. You should go back home and work for the true good of your country, help it to shake off the influence of England. England scatters her gold through America to bribe your good will. Germany has gold too, mountains of it. You say you are not rich; but you can be, if you will be advised by me."

Noll could hardly master voice enough to say:

"You mean that you want me to go back to America and work for Germany there?"

"Yes, exactly."

"But—"

"Oh, you would not work openly, of course."

"But I am an American first, you know."

"Plenty of Americans work for us. I could show you the receipts of some of them; their names would surprise you—America is as full of German agents as an old dog is full of fleas! They are well paid, too."

Noll's voice stuck like a bone in his throat. He coughed to dislodge it.

"How much—how much would I be worth to the Kaiser?"

"That depends, of course, on what you accomplish. For small jobs, small pay; for big jobs, big. If you put a little article in a paper, that is something. If you blow up a munitions-factory, that is much. We have secret-service men there. We need counter-espionage—some one to guard the guards. We need decoys. It is safe, it is comfortable, it is profitable."

"There's a but to that."

"Let us discuss the buts!"

Klemm was already gloating over Noll as a captured corrupted victim. Noll felt such a loathing of him that he could not control himself. A few words more, and he would have to throttle the scoundrel. If Klemm did not take his arm from Noll's elbow, Noll would have to knock him down and beat him up. He made haste to escape before his temper mastered him.

"I'd like a chance to think it over."

"I understand, my dear Herr Vinsor." Klemm patted Noll's shoulder so benignly that Noll had to put his fist in his pocket to keep it out of Klemm's face.

Noll turned to leave at once, but a sudden thought arrested him.

"Oh, one thing more: My mother's



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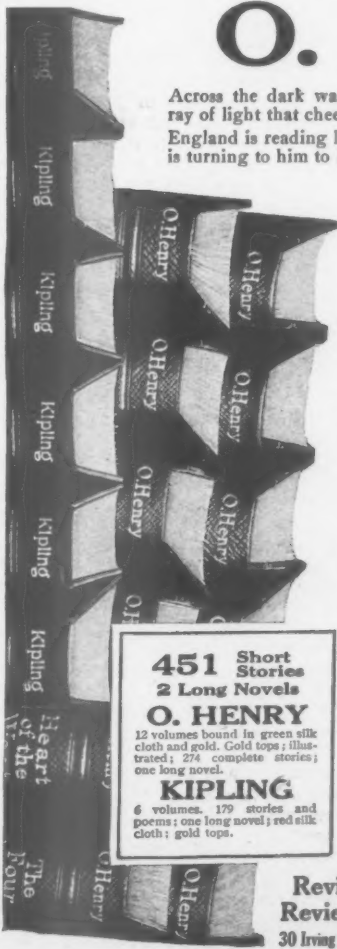
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sister is in Germany. I promised my mother to write to her—and make sure that she is comfortable. She was in distress a few months ago—hungry and all that."

"Your aunt shall be taken care of beautifully, Herr Vinsor, once we are sure of you."

"Thanks—that's fine! And she has a son—my cousin Nazi Duhr. He was in America, at my home, before the war. If I could meet him—or learn where he is—"

"You shall know at once. I will give you a peep at the efficiency of the German system. Give me his name and home, and I—as you dear Americans say—I will do the rest."

Noll gave him what information he had, and Klemm promised him a dazzlingly quick reply. They parted forthwith. As Noll hurried along the street, he saw that the eyes of the Belgians were reproachful. They were the eyes of dogs that have been tricked and beaten. He shuddered with hatred of the rôle he had assumed.

He was miserable, but he felt that if he could find Nazi Duhr, he could learn something of the Thuringian regiment that had paused at Dofnay and destroyed the happiness of Dimny Parcot. Perhaps his own cousin was among the fiends who took part in that beastliness. It would be an improbable coincidence, but all things incredible had become matters of everyday occurrence.

The next morning he found a note from Klemm under his door. It informed him that Lieutenant Nazi Duhr was with the First Thuringian Regiment, temporarily stationed at *Loewen*—which Noll recognized as the German name of Louvain.

CHAPTER LI

KLEMM knew Dimny already well enough to realize that he could make her no gift that would so enhance him in her eyes as the privilege of being the bearer of a flag of rescue to the beleaguered daughters of England, of bringing the relief to Lucknow in person. So he offered to take Dimny in his motor, but she was not yet steeled to such excursions, and seeing her embarrassment, he had a happy thought.

"Perhaps you like better to go by Herr Vinsor's car."

"Oh, yes," Dimny cried, "—that is, if you don't mind." After all, Noll was only half German, and she had got over her first shock, remembering now his devotion. Klemm was obliging too.

"I am most happy to do such a nice young man a favor. *Glückliche Reise!*"

"I beg your pardon?"

"I wish you a gladly chourney."

"Oh, thank you!"

He thought it happy indeed. He could afford to put Noll under obligations while he lulled the alarms of Dimny. He provided the passes, and nothing could have been more benevolent than his gracious Godspeed. Dimny spoke of him with such mollified distrust that Noll was tempted to tell her of the slimy synposal Klemm had made to him. Indeed Noll had an inclination to tell her everything now. He wished especially to

tell her things to the discredit of her courtier Klemm, but he felt that she had worries enough, and while his desire to keep no secrets from her proved the thoroughness of his love, his motives for keeping this secret from her proved its depth.

The first convent they were to visit lay to the northwest of Brussels.

Dimny rang the bell at a little door. A lay-sister looked out from above in terror. She had reason for terror. She had been one of a group of five women and girls whom the German troops had driven ahead of them as a screen against the Belgian fire. She motioned Dimny to another door. The portress admitted her and left her in a little cell of a reception-room while she fetched the Sister Superior. Sœur Jeanne was a matronly little body despite her habit of a *religieuse*, and sharp eyes snapped behind her spectacles. She was used to managing her little walled city with authority, and she had faced a German brute with calm, but when Dimny explained what she had come to do, Sœur Jeanne went into a flutter.

Instead of greeting Dimny as the rescuing angel Dimny had expected to appear, she stared at her with horror. Sœur Jeanne had brought her charges through many dangers to this new haven; the thought of taking her girls out into the world again gave her the emotions of an old-maid hen who has raised a little gang of ducklings only to see them decoyed toward a wide and fatal pond.

Dimny pacified her by describing the sufferings of the mothers in England. Melted at last, Sœur Jeanne consented to let Dimny place the matter before the girls themselves. It was her belief that they were safer here, inasmuch as the war would soon be over, but since the mothers wanted them at home, the girls should decide.

She led Dimny down a long white-washed tunnel across a snow-invested frozen garden into a room where a little throng was gathered under the care of various pallid nuns. In this white, white refuge, girls studied and nuns taught as people had done in the ancient Belgium of a few months back. Even the rumor of battle had apparently not reached this war-proof island.

The demure inhabitants rolled their eyes as pupils do when a visitor comes to school, but they made no stir. When the Sister Superior explained that Miss Parcot was from America, there was a vibration of interest. With grave generosity Sœur Jeanne let Dimny explain her errand, and Dimny made a little recitation as timidly as if it were her first appearance on a platform.

"I don't know what to say," she began. She could tell by the puzzled brows of the majority that her words were foreign, but a few girls perked greedy ears for the beloved language.

"You see, when I was in England, I met a mother who asked me to try to get her daughter and other mothers' daughters back."

Two or three girls who withstood the word "England" could not stand "mother." They broke into sobs. The other girls tried to comfort them. There was a little panic, which Dimny stamped completely by calling out:

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"I have brought permission to send you home."

That last word shattered the courage of all of them. Six English girls leaped to their feet gasping with unbelief. They crowded forward like frantic beggars, while Dimny explained as best she could, answering all questions and none.

One girl flung her arms about Dimny and wept gorgeously, filling Dimny's narrow bosom with the most maternal emotions—Sœur Jeanne's also, though she stood frowning at the scene. She was trying to scare back the tears sliding across her cheeks as if her eyes were telling the beads of mercy. She was afraid to have her ewe-lambs go out into the world, but there was no resisting that famine-cry of home-hunger.

Dimny explained that it would be necessary to have the photograph of each girl taken for her passport. Sœur Jeanne thought this an unnecessary vanity, but Dimny had only to say "von Bissing's orders" to convince her. She promised that by the morrow all the papers would be complete, and the hand-baggage ready so that they could be whisked across the frontier before the Germans could change their minds.

WHEN Dimny rejoined Noll, she felt like a successful angel out paying afternoon calls. On the flight back to Brussels she told Noll that he should have the privilege of taking the first load of girls into Holland. He had to make the trip with the mail in any case.

So, the next morning early, Noll ran out to Termonde and took aboard his cargo. There was some delay in packing both girls and baggage in the available space, but he returned to Brussels without losing any of either.

Dimny was at the office of the C. R. B. when he stopped there for the mail-pouch. When she saw him among his bevy of chattering magpies, she said with laughter:

"I'm showing an awful lot of confidence in you to trust you with so many pretty girls."

He gave such a start at this that she realized how much more her words implied than she had meant. Then she blushed in her turn, and when at length he drove away, though he gave her a farewell look like a vow of loyalty, she felt a strange pang of uneasiness. She stared after the picnic-party and felt alone indeed; abandoned, another Ariadne forsaken by a lover.

Then she gasped with amazement at herself. Could this be jealousy? And could this be she that felt it? But one does not feel jealousy of one that one does not—Her mind shied from the dreadful word.

AS Noll left behind the prison province of Belgium, he remembered Dimny's anxiety about Vrouw Weenix. She had told him of Klemm's assurance that the peasant woman had been set free. He remembered the cottage; she had pointed it out to him on their way into Belgium. He drew up there now to make inquiry.

The place was filled with refugees who had found in the abandoned house a shelter from the winter. When Noll knocked at the door and asked for Vrouw



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Weenix, an emaciated old woman told him that Vrouw Weenix was dead—shot by the Germans, and buried in a pit in Eссhen.

Noll was not yet so used to tragedies as to be indifferent to the destruction of the poor old crone, this one more field-mouse in the claws of the black eagle.

He was nauseated, too, by the lie that Klemm had told, disgusted at himself for parleying with the scoundrel, aflame with a determination to hasten back to Brussels, denounce Klemm for his cynicism and warn Dimny against further association with him.

The schoolgirls found Noll an unaccountably surly companion. They were as glad to leave him at Rotterdam as he to be quit of their responsibility. When he turned them over to other guardians, he had no imagination to follow them across the Channel to their blissful reunions with their families, nor to imagine the rapture of the German girls exchanged for them, girl for girl: the lucky chosen ones weeping with incredulous joy, the deferred ones weeping with homesick anxiety lest the next quota of English girls might not get past the barrier. They knew their German fathers, those German daughters from the *Heimat* of Magda.

Noll begged permission to return at once to Brussels. But it was impossible to get his messages ready till the third day. Three batches of English girls came in by train from Brussels before he could leave Rotterdam; and on the return trip he passed two more motor-loads of them in C. R. B. cars.

He burned out his engine just as he reached the C. R. B. headquarters, but he did not stop for repairs. He delivered his mail-bag and flew to the Palace Hotel.

He asked for Colonel Klemm first. The German attendant explained that the Herr Oberstleutnant had left Brussels an hour before in his car.

Noll asked for Miss Parcot. The attendant grinned.

"She left an hour ago in the car of the Herr Oberstleutnant Klemm."

Noll was thunderstruck. He stammered:

"Where did they go? When do they come back?"

"They did not say."

Noll's fist ached to destroy the leer on that hateful face, but his terror for Dimny unmanned him.

CHAPTER LII

NOLL'S mind ran everywhere and got nowhere with the mad futility of a squirrel in a wheel.

His love cried out in terror that she had been kidnaped and was suffering Heaven only knew what fate. He could make no guess which way to pursue. She had been gone more than an hour. In that time she could be forty or fifty miles along any one of the roads radiating from Brussels. How could he follow without knowing which road to choose?

He asked the clerk which direction they took. The clerk said that he could not imagine. The porter at the door said that he could not remember; the sentinel that he had not seen them at all,

since his relief had been posted only a few minutes ago.

Noll could not telephone to the C. R. B., for the telephone was a German military monopoly. He set out to walk to the office on the off chance that Dimny had left word there. As he pushed through the crowds, it came over him that if she had been able to, or inclined to, she would have left at least a note at the hotel for him. Now he recalled the cordiality she had revealed toward Klemm the last time he saw them together. Jealousy filled Noll with poisoned arrows. Perhaps she had gone willingly with Klemm, and had not cared enough for Noll to write him a line! But that would mean that she had forgotten him—and forgotten herself too. Could she have lost all self-respect, all discretion?

He reviled himself for permitting such vile thoughts even to fly through his mind. He tried to close his mental doors and windows to them, but they found crannies. He resolved that Dimny had not left word for him, because Klemm had promised her an immediate return. He had decoyed her out on some errand of mercy.

Noll went on to the office and questioned everybody there. Skelton spoke of the fact that Miss Curfey had not yet been found. It was known that Dimny was especially eager to rescue her.

That was it, of course. Noll hurried to the hotel. Still she had not returned. He waited and waited, fuming and pacing the floor. He would not go to dinner lest she come in hungry and find him fed. But at last he went down and tried to eat; food choked him.

He climbed back to his room and hung at the window staring into the deepening gloom and the freezing wind, watching for Klemm's car. Night arrived, established itself; the streets emptied themselves of all but the miserable sentinels.

Noll imagined Dimny a prisoner, the victim of her sister's fate, a helpless captive screaming to him for help. He prayed for guidance. He leaned against her door and wished that he might hear her crying there again. Better her wails than that silence; better far to suffer than not to be able to suffer.

He fell asleep in a chair by the open window and woke in an ague of cold. He fell on the bed and slept again, and woke again in a broad day that gave him no light. He knocked on her door, hoping that she had come in while he slept. But there was no answer.

NOLL went to his breakfast and asked the clerk if any message had come for him, or any news of her. The clerk smiled and shook his head. Noll went again to the C. R. B. office and told Skelton the truth. Skelton was alarmed and hurried off to the Kommandantur to make inquiries. Everyone there professed ignorance of Klemm's whereabouts. He had no regular whereabouts, indeed. His commissions were all roving. His responsibility was to Berlin.

Incapable of waiting longer, Noll took the C. R. B. car and set out on a hunt at random. The first four-corners stooped him.

In his confusion he remembered that Klemm had told him of Nazi Duhr's pres-

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ence in Louvain. For lack of any other impulse, Noll turned his car toward that city. At the regimental headquarters there, he learned where his cousin was billeted, and leaving his car at headquarters,—at the firm suggestion of headquarters,—he found his way to the residence honored by the compulsory guest.

As he was about to knock at the door a gaunt, hollow-eyed, hypochondriacal officer came out.

Remembering the pink cheeks and thick red lips and baby-faced beauty that had marked Nazi when he visited Noll's mother at Carthage, Noll had no suspicion that this woe-begone scarecrow in uniform could be his cousin. The officer spoke in a dismal tone:

"Zu wem wollen Sie?"

"Ich möchte Herr Leutnant Duhr sprechen."

"Ich bin es."

"Du lieber Himmel!"

Nazi scowled at this, and Noll made haste to explain who he was. Nazi was incredulous. Slowly he recognized Noll. He expressed great delight verbally in the meeting, but his spirit was broken, and he was incapable of his old exuberance. He was war-worn and discouraged. He had hardly strength enough for curiosity as to Noll's motives in coming to Belgium.

Noll asked how Nazi's mother was and if she had got the money, and Nazi said that she was well and she had; and how was Noll's mother, and that was good, and to give her his greetings when he went back.

Noll said he hoped Nazi's mother was not still hungry, and Nazi said that everybody in Germany was hungry and that it was hoped the war would be over soon before everybody starved.

He looked about him cautiously and used Klemm's very words.

"Haben Sie Lust spazieren zu gehen?"

WONDERING, Noll assented, and Nazi guided him toward the more deserted ruins of the city while he poured out his wrath at the Prussians and at Kaiserdom and its deeds. He had been reading Liebknecht and Maximilian Harden and other German opponents of militarism just before the war broke. Passing his colonel, he saluted him with great decision but later snarled: "Du militärisches Kultur-schwein!"

Noll was glad enough to hear Nazi curse the Culture-hogs, but he was not much interested in the internal economy of the Empire, not much convinced by Nazi's prophecies of a great upheaval shortly to throw down the Teutonic tyrants.

"It will go through the soil of the Fatherland like a great plow," cried Nazi, "turning under the ground the high gaudy weeds and bringing to the surface the deep common clay."

"Also a lot of bugs and worms," said Noll carelessly. He was wondering where Dimmy was. That was more important to him than the political destinies of Germany. Thinking that she might have looked for Nazi in Louvain, he broke in on Nazi's flaming socialisms.

"By the way, have you seen an American young lady in Louvain?"

Nazi was dumfounded, and he startled

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their trip to Dofnay, their passage through Louvain without thought of search, and of many other things; but he spoke no word of Alice's letter to Dimny. He tried to pretend that he knew nothing of their martyrdom, and he tried to keep from his eyes any confession that he realized its cruel aftermath.

Alice and her mother wept and laughed. They tossed side-explanations to the Tuesdays in French and explained to Noll a little of the tragedies that had bound the two families together.

They asked him at length how he came to find their home, and he told them of his cousin Nazi. This threw Alice into a sudden and appalling gloom. She asked what Nazi had said of her. And Noll, understanding in a flash, felt a longing to dash out and murder his cousin. He tried with all his might to seem oblivious of any horror in the air.

Alice's mother began to ask where Dimny was, and Noll must now conceal his alarm as to her disappearance. He did not confess that he had come to Louvain in search of Dimny or a clue to her. He dared not quench the new flame of happiness so soon.

He said that being in Louvain and hearing of a Miss Parcot there, he assumed that Miss Dimny must have come down from Brussels where she undoubtedly was. He urged them to come with him at once to meet her.

To his stupefaction his proposal was received rather with dismay than as the natural and only thing to do. Before he could solve this problem in his mind, another reason for the impossibility of his suggestion occurred to him.

"You can't go to Brussels without a pass, and it might be hard to get one here. So I'll fly back there in my car and get Dimny here. She can go where she pleases; she has a pass to look up those English girls. And I'll get Skelton of the C. R. B. to fix up your passes back to America."

This inspiration had the further effect of increasing the dismay. The two women looked at each other with an indescribable pathos of shame and confusion and said nothing. Noll began to understand in a jumbled and terrified fashion something of what was going on in their souls.

He felt hopelessly out of place. He rose and said:

"You wait here, then, till I bring Dimny. It takes less than an hour to run up to Brussels, and if she's ready to start, I'll be back during the afternoon."

They stared at him with an ox-eyed melancholy. They thanked him in a daze, and he left them.

NOLL found his car and sent it flying to Brussels, assured that Dimny would be there.

But she was not there. And there was no news of her. He could not telegraph or telephone this to Louvain. He could only wait in a fever of all emotions, none of them endurable. His thoughts were whipped from one terror to another.

In the next installment, in the May issue, Mr. Hughes tells dramatically of the net into which Dimny had fallen.

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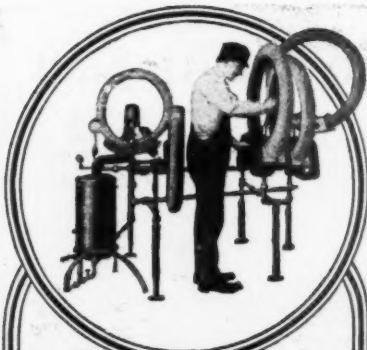
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(Continued from page 62)

head as though in rejection of something he had silently expressed to her. She saw that Burton had detected her, and said at once:

"Oh, you caught me! Alice and I watch Mr. Ledyard very carefully at table. His doctor holds him to a strict regimen, and I was trying to tell him as politely as possible that he can't have a second chop!"

It was a neat bit of work, but Burton, schooled in the definite and actual, felt an unfamiliar stirring of the intangible, the mysterious. As though anxious to ingratiate herself, Miss Shipley engaged him in a brisk debate on the merits of "Madame Bovary," which she thought a much overrated novel.

"If you should feel like taking a walk, Mr. Burton, I'm ready whenever you are!" suggested Alice when they had returned to the living-room. Her manner was the most casual; she was turning over the pages of a book when she spoke. Ledyard, who was gazing moodily out of the window, turned and involuntarily, it seemed, lifted his eyes for a glance at Miss Shipley. She ignored him and said to Burton:

"That will be fine; it's a lovely afternoon for a walk."

LEDYARD resumed the examination of the papers on his desk with a murmur of assent.

"I'm quite ready," said Burton. "I'll change my shoes and be down in a second."

When he returned, he was conscious of a vague tenseness in the air. They had been talking about him, he knew from the eagerness with which they immediately addressed him, chaffing him about his walking powers.

Alice struck off at a quick pace, plunging into the woods along a trail which she said was a favorite of hers. She had drawn on an orange sweater and capped her head with a tam-o'-shanter to match. For a time she was silent, and in furtive glances Burton saw that her lips were tightly compressed and there was a determined look in her eyes. He tramped beside her, or followed her where the path narrowed, anxious not to break in upon her mood. He was utterly unprepared for the suddenness with which, after nearly an hour, she stopped at the edge of a ravine slashed through the hills and faced him. Her eyes betrayed deep agitation.

"I'm sorry—I'm more sorry than I can tell you, that I let you come!"

"But I wanted to come! It was not your urging; it was an urging of the spirit, let us call it," he said lightly.

"No, no! You were tricked into it! I made it hard for you to refuse! I wanted some one here I could rely on—some one who may help! And you can see already that they suspect you! That woman is abusing Father now for having brought you. He's enormously afraid of her."

These revelations, uttered rapidly, were less staggering for what they actually re-

vealed than for the vast range of the unknown that they suggested.

"Let us sit here," she continued, indicating a flat boulder. "It was an old haunt of ours; it was here that I warned him to go; and it was here that we made our vows. We were to have gone away the very next day. I never saw him again after dinner that night."

She hadn't mentioned Porter directly, but it was sufficiently clear that it was of him she spoke.

"I know only what the newspapers printed about him. There can be no question, I suppose, that he is—"

"If he were alive," she said bravely, "he would come back; he would not leave me here. He knew too much of what I suffered. He could never have doubted that I loved him."

She said this calmly, as though there were nothing remarkable in such a confession to a man she had met only two days before. Nothing had ever so moved him as her confidence, her trust in him.

"I should like to know all you know," he said.

"I went to the bungalow that evening," she began, "and Frances remained for a while at the Lodge. Oh, yes, she's a partner in the game, the more dangerous because she doesn't look the part! She's a master-hand at cards, and the plan was to ruin Tommy. After I met him in Colorado, he came to the Lodge repeatedly. To see me it was necessary for him to come here and let himself be victimized. But it wasn't just gaming; it was a deep-laid scheme to get some stock away from him that was necessary to control an enormously rich mine in Nevada. There were others in the plot. I was afraid to tell him the web that was being woven round him. It's not an easy thing to tell the man you love that your own father is bent upon robbing him. And when I got the courage to tell him, it was too late!"

"You will understand the sort of life I've led when I tell you I've never known women; I scarcely remember my mother, so quite literally I've never known a woman except Frances. My father is a born gambler; I can never remember the time when he didn't live by gaming. In Europe we moved from one hotel to another like fugitives. Poor Tommy! He knew it all and was so happy in the thought of getting me out of it!"

"Miss Shipley has been kind to you," suggested Burton. "You seem the best of friends."

The girl was silent for a moment, then she answered brokenly:

"It was Tommy who changed all that! He interested her at once; she fell madly in love with him. She knew perfectly well why he kept coming back. But I have no right to say that she knows any more of what happened that night than I do. They had a game of cards, which was the usual program. Frances came to the bungalow at midnight. About ten o'clock the next morning there was a great uproar because Tommy had gone, vanished utterly. His things were in his

room; there was nothing to show why he had left."

"The men—the other guests—" "They all told the same story; their statements agreed in every particular. Detectives worked on the case for weeks. There were unpleasant hints about Papa in the papers; and I didn't escape. Now that I have told you everything I know, you can see how pitifully little it is, and —there is nothing you can do! You were generous to come; I am very, very grateful. But to-morrow I want you to go. I've done enough evil," she ended despairingly; "and if any harm came to you—" "No harm will come to me, and I shall not go," he said.

ALICE'S intimation that jealousy might have been a contributing factor in Porter's disappearance had greatly roused Burton; but Frances' serenity, the impression she gave of a well-bred, cultivated woman, did not encourage the feeling that she had connived at the destruction of a man who had passed her by to give his love to another woman. Whatever annoyance Burton's appearance at the Lodge had caused her, she appeared to have overcome it.

Coffee was served, after dinner, before the living-room fireplace.

They had hardly settled themselves before the snapping logs when the knocker at the front door sounded, and the butler appeared with a telegram which Ledyard took with an assumption of indifference belied by his shaking hand.

"The impertinence of telegrams!" laughed Frances, who was composedly filling the cups.

Ledyard walked to the fireplace, half crumpling the paper, and then with a muttered "Pardon me" dropped it on the table.

"Oh, how nice!" Burton heard Miss Shipley exclaim as she read the message. "Mr. Fairfield and Mr. Wands are coming up!"

Alice, stirring her cup, laughed a little harshly, Burton thought. "Really! How very nice!" she murmured with a slight mockery of Miss Shipley's tone.

"Suppose we go to the bungalow and have some music," suggested Frances presently. "This is just the night for Chopin!"

"I'll come over later," said Ledyard, who was plainly relieved at being left alone.

Alice began playing immediately when they reached the bungalow. Burton settled himself in an easy-chair and was at once swept into far fields of reverie. He forgot Frances' presence; once he heard her stirring somewhere, but the music had obliterated her. Alice played for an hour in which no word was spoken; then, still playing, she swept the room with a glance, and with a slight movement of the head called him to the piano.

"Frances has gone," she said. "She left soon after we came. It was necessary for them to confer about those men who are coming. They are not welcome, you understand. They're coming, you know, for their share of the spoils!"

She shivered; her shoulders twitched as though cut by an invisible lash.

"They're planning for to-morrow?" he



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inquired. "They've got a situation to meet—is that it?"

"That's precisely it. Those men were dogging Father in New York, and he fell in with the idea of having you up because he thought if they followed, you'd be in some sense a protection—to him! I've said all that I can say to you about the danger. I don't know what may happen to-morrow; anything may happen! You will remember, wont you, that I urged you to go?"

"Yes; but you would hate me if I went. Certainly I would hate myself if I left you here."

She nodded her head slowly. Her breath came in little gasps; there were tears in her eyes. Then she walked to a music-cabinet and drew out a pistol.

"I want you to take this; I've had it—ever since that night—to end the whole thing if I got desperate. This man Fairfield—" She shivered, and a look of fear crossed her face. "I can't be quite sure of Papa; when he needs money—"

She did not flinch under this confession of her fear of Ledyard. She had implied unutterable things so frankly that his blood chilled.

"When you go back, don't—don't see anything. Go directly to your room and lock the door."

The hand she gave him at the door was as cold as the steel of the automatic he had thrust into his pocket. His mind was in a whirl when he reached the open. He hurried to the Lodge and found the door unlocked. The living-room fire had burned out, and the vast calm of the woods lay upon the house. He mounted the stairs and reached his room without seeing anyone.

At eight o'clock he woke to the monotonous murmur of a steady downpour of rain. He dressed and went down to find Alice and Frances waiting for him in the living-room.

"Breakfasting alone on a gray morning isn't very cheerful, so we took pity on you and came over to keep you company," remarked Frances. "I really meant to see you again last night, but Mr. Ledyard's been troubled about the household accounts, and I came over to do a little auditing."

Ledyard came to the breakfast-table with an assumption of gayety that bewildered Burton.

"I must run down to the station and pick up Fairfield and Wands," he remarked. "Would any of you care to come along?"

"I've rather promised myself the pleasure of a game of billiards with Mr. Burton," said Frances. "And if that doesn't exhaust him, and I don't bore him too much, I'm keen for a tramp this afternoon. The rain's about over, and the roads will dry quickly. Maybe Alice will go along!"

"You will find Frances a far cheerier comrade than I proved; you may be sure I sha'n't spoil your party," said Alice with a glance that conveyed to Burton the idea that he was to accept the invitations.

Frances evidently intended to make it easy for Ledyard to be alone with his new guests, and Burton thought it wise to meet her wishes.

Billiards served to keep Burton occupied until noon, and he got his first glimpse of the newcomers in the living-room. Ledyard introduced them with an offhand air of good fellowship. Fairfield was of Ledyard's own type—small, precise, rather dandified. Wands was short, florid and stout, with a yellowish beard. It was evident that they wished to convey the impression of intimacy of old friends of the house. Alice and Frances appeared for luncheon a moment later. Frances welcomed the men cordially; Alice's manner was reserved.

Frances announced her walk with Burton as they were leaving their seats, in such manner that there was no detaining her. As they set out, Frances' liveliness was that of one who has escaped from something very disagreeable.

"Bores, both of them!" was her way of speaking of Wands and Fairfield. "Mr. Ledyard made the mistake of asking them up once, and they brought bad luck! Dear Tommy Porter, you know! Those men were here that night. Of course, no one was responsible; but it was most inconsiderate of Mr. Porter to run off in that fashion, and leave us—" She shrugged her shoulders. "But I'm so grateful for your being here. You and Alice hit it off together splendidly! The dear child is so *triste*; it breaks my heart to see her so unhappy. Of course, she loved Tommy dearly; but you have had a cheering effect on her; she's almost her old self since she came back. I've wondered sometimes whether she doesn't hope against hope that Tommy is still alive!"

He was instantly on guard, aware that she was feeling him out as to what Alice might have said to him.

"Of course she would say nothing to me," he answered. "The thought that Porter may be alive is too startling; it hadn't occurred to me. After so many months—how long has it been?"

He thought a smile quivered on her lips at his evasion. She stopped in the woodland path and pondered for a moment.

"It was—just six months ago, and just before the winter's last fall of snow. I remember of thinking that if the snow had come a day earlier, we might have had some way of tracing him."

NO one could have been more companionable; they got along famously. The shadows were falling before she asked the hour and led the way homeward. They would barely have time to dress for dinner, he estimated, wondering just how far she would go in her determination not to be left alone with the three men.

He left her at the bungalow and hurried to the Lodge, where the men, already dressed, were having a cocktail. He judged from Ledyard's nervousness and the sullen appearance of Wands and Fairfield that the afternoon at the Lodge had not been a happy one. Dinner would have been a gloomy affair but for Frances' amusing attempts at frivolity, the neatly pointed ironies with which she glibed Wands and Fairfield. And then, as the tray was carried out after the ceremonial serving of coffee in the living-room, she complained languidly of fatigue and suggested that Alice and she would carry

Burton to the bungalow for some music promised him.

Wands and Fairfield were on their feet before she could rise, and they strode to the coffee-table menacingly.

"You are not going to leave this house! Do you understand, Miss Shipley—you remain right here!" cried Wands, beating the table sharply.

"Oh, you really wish me to stay?" she asked with an air of surprise. "How very nice of you!"

Her gaze passed insolently from Wands to Fairfield and on to Ledyard, whose face twitched with excitement. Burton, uncertain what to do, walked toward the glass doors that opened upon the veranda. Alice stood there; indeed, she had been there with her face pressed against the pane for several minutes.

"You are making a fool of yourself," cried Ledyard shrilly. "There are things we've got to talk to you about!"

Burton resolved to get Alice away from the house as quickly as possible. He was about to speak, when he saw her gasp and totter. Then, suddenly aroused, she opened the door and passed out. Burton followed, closing the door. He still heard the strident clamor. From their tone it seemed that the men meant to restrain the insolent Miss Shipley by force if necessary.

Alice had darted to the veranda-rail and was peering down into the garden.

"It was a face at the window," she faltered, seizing his hand. "It was—it was—so like him!"

FIFTY yards away they heard the sound of some one brushing through the wall of shrubbery, and an electric lamp's quick flash cut the dark. The little automatic she had given Burton was in his pocket; he suspected that all the men at the dinner-table that night had been armed!

"Leave this to me," he said, and grasping her arm, ran with her down the steps. "I'll see what the light means. Go to the bungalow quickly, and don't admit anyone till I come."

Her murmur of assent reached him faintly as he plunged into the garden. Crossing it, he came to the trail followed by Alice in their walk, and advanced boldly through the woods. He stumbled over a root; before he regained his balance, a man sprang at him from the dark and flung him heavily to the ground. The automatic flew into space as he fell. His captor's knees gripped him tightly. The man groped for his lamp, found it and snapped the light in Burton's face.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded in a tone that betrayed disappointment. Again the lamp flashed, and he repeated his question: "Be quick about it. Who are you?"

"You've had your look at me," Burton answered. "Suppose you turn the light on your own countenance. I don't think we have any quarrel with each other." And then he added: "You've gained weight, Tommy, since we used to box in the college gym."

The light clung to Burton's face as his captor scrutinized him closely.

"Gay Burton! Good Lord!" he exclaimed. He jumped up and dragged



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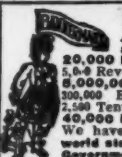
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Burton to his feet. "May I ask just what you are doing in that den of thieves?"

"Looking for you, if you must know it! It would be nearer the truth if I said that I came up to find out who murdered you."

"The Class—some of the fellows—sent you?"

"Not at all; the spirit of adventure—my anxiety to find romance!"

"You must have changed a good deal, then, since your last depressing book! I sent for it to cheer me during my convalescence."

"Thanks! But we've got to move quickly," said Burton. "There's no time to waste. I was going to get Alice away to-night."

Porter's hand fell heavily upon his shoulder.

"She's well; she still believes in me?" he cried eagerly. "I caught just a glimpse of her through the door."

"She's well, and you needn't question her love for you, Tommy," said Burton. "But there's a great row on at the Lodge; Wands and Fairfield are there."

"Oh, I know they are all there! That's what I've been hanging about for, to make sure! I've got to face them together. And now, by George, is the accepted time!"

"You can't go back there," Burton protested. "We've got to be off at once."

"I'm going to settle my accounts with them first!" said Porter firmly. "We may need your gun. I'll take a minute to find it."

HE recovered the automatic with the aid of the lamp, and they set off for the Lodge. "I fell into this game," he explained, "merely that I might be near Alice. I'd relinquished all my available cash when they made a bold play for some mining-stock—my whole fortune, in fact. Alice had warned me to go, but I hadn't perfected my plans for marrying her and making a clean get-away. Wands and Fairfield had some shares in the mining company, and we'd talked of the mine on earlier visits; they had asked me to bring up my certificates with a view to buying me out—a big syndicate and all that large talk. Just to be accommodated, I did so, and found that their game was the rather dashing one of gambling me out of my holdings."

"There was a jolly row, with pistols, and I got a piece of lead in my left lung and a crack over the head that laid me out. When I came to, I was lying in the bottom of a ravine twenty miles from here. Luckily a deputy game-warden found me the next morning; he proved to be an old Adirondack guide I'd done my first hunting with as a boy. He smuggled a doctor up to his cabin, and his wife nursed me. I kept in hiding primarily for Alice's sake; and besides, I wanted those fellows to believe they had killed me, until I was able to deal with them myself."

They were nearing the Lodge, and Porter paused to finish his story.

"After I got mended, I had a long siege of typhoid; I wasn't discharged until a week ago, and I've been living here in the woods with the old guide. Wands and Fairfield have been lying low before

dividing the spoils, to make sure I didn't turn up. Fairfield's an expert forger and quite capable of indorsing my certificates. But they're in the trap now, just where I want them. The sheriff of this county and half a dozen men are scattered over the premises. But first and always I don't want you mixed up in this thing. Please go to the bungalow and have everything ready when I holler!"

"Don't be foolish! I'm here to help you!" said Burton, and led the way toward the Lodge.

They reconnoitered the living-room from the veranda windows and found it empty. Burton opened the door, and they stood inside listening.

"Stand here," whispered Porter, "and watch the billiard-room door. They're probably in the gaming-room back of it."

He moved with deliberate certainty to the front door. In a moment he was back, followed by three men, big, bearded fellows, who stationed themselves as he directed.

"I'll go in first," Burton suggested. "I am a guest here, and they can hardly shoot me for looking up my host."

PORTER demurred, but they stole down the hall with Burton leading. He opened the billiard-room door softly. From the room beyond, which he had never seen, there came a low hum of voices. Burton walked to the door and knocked. There was an instant's silence; then the door was thrown open, and Miss Shipley stood smiling on the threshold.

"How unkind of us to shut ourselves up! But we thought you went home with Alice. We were about to indulge in a little whist. Please take my place—I'm really glad to quit!"

They had not been playing; Burton saw Ledyard furtively seize a pack of cards and begin shuffling them, while Wands slipped into a chair and feigned absorption in his cards.

Reassured by Burton's manner, the men chorused a boisterous greeting to cover their discomfiture.

"You must pardon me, Burton; I really thought you'd gone to the bungalow for another evening of music," remarked Ledyard pleasantly. "Miss Shipley is bored; do play her hand."

"Thank you," said Burton, walking carelessly toward the table, "but it has just been my privilege to welcome another guest, an old friend—"

"A very old friend indeed!" interrupted Porter, standing suddenly beside him.

Ledyard sprang to his feet, staring wildly, and then with a groan toppled backward and fell heavily to the floor.

"None of that!" cried Porter, leveling a revolver at Fairfield, whose hand had flashed to the pocket of his dinner-coat. Burton pointed his automatic at Wands, who had fallen back against the wall and stood there gaping.

"Guns on the table, gentlemen," Burton ordered. "And Miss Shipley," he admonished, as he saw the girl retreating slowly toward a door at the rear, "will you be kind enough to remain where you are? Thank you!"

Porter drew a sheathed knife from Ledyard's pocket and tossed it on the table.

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Ledyard's collapse was absolute. He was deathly pale, and he lay very still.

"I see," remarked Porter, advancing to the table and brushing the cards aside, "I see some documents here that have a familiar look. You've had ample time to compare your shares with mine, Mr. Fairfield; and I see," he went on, turning over the certificates, "that you've already done a very neat forgery."

"It was Ledyard!" shouted Wands. "The whole game was his idea!"

With the swiftness of lightning Fairfield seized a chair and flung it at Burton's head.

"Duck!" warned Porter, at the same moment intercepting Fairfield and dealing him a smashing blow in the face. "Now, Mr. Wands, and Miss Shipley, don't you please behave yourselves? The sheriff is in the living-room, but I'm not disposed to be ugly. I've got what I came for, and I shall tell him not to trouble you."

Ledyard turned uneasily and moaned. The perspiration streamed down Wands' face.

"You mean—you mean?" he gulped.

"I mean," said Porter with a smile, "that I'm not going to prosecute you for attempted murder and robbery, or for maintaining a gambling-den. My friends outside will watch you till I'm well out of the way. Alice goes with me. Please say to Ledyard that we are to be married immediately."

BURTON was watching Frances. The girl stood listlessly, with her arm hanging along the mantel. At Alice's name, her frame shook. Then she lifted her head and walked with regal dignity to the table. Her mockery, her cool insolence, had vanished.

"I want you to know my part in this!" he said in a low tone, so low that Wands and Fairfield craned their necks to hear. "It was I who struck you down—that blow on the head from behind! It was infamous; it was horrible! I never loved any man but you," she went on steadily. "I was madly jealous! That is all. I do not ask for mercy, but I want you to know that I'm as bad as the rest."

Porter's hand that held the pistol upon Wands fell to his side. He bowed gravely.

"I never thought so well of you as now," Porter said. "Any harm you have done me is forgotten in my gratitude for all that you have done for Alice. You have been immensely kind to her; you protected her from—from such scoundrels as these! She is sweet and clean of body and soul, because the real woman in you kept guard over her! After I have gone, the men I brought with me will see that no harm comes to you, and if you wish to leave, they will give you safe-conduct."

"She betrayed us! She's tricked us!" whined Fairfield, nursing his bruised mouth.

"She has done nothing of the kind," said Porter, wheeling upon him. "Be very careful what you say, now and hereafter! I believe that is all, Burton!"

As they left, Frances was still standing as when she made her confession, with the tips of her fingers resting on the table.

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and be quick about it," said Porter. "We will cover a lot of distance before morning."

ALL night they drove toward the south, Porter relieving his chauffeur from time to time. The pace was furious, and only now and then were any words spoken. At eight o'clock they were in a little town where Porter drove to the house of a minister, another of his college class. They were married in the study of the parsonage, with the minister's wife and Porter's chauffeur and Burton as witnesses.

As the last words of the service were spoken, Porter clasped his wife in a long embrace. Then she turned, smiling through her tears, to Burton, laid her hands on his shoulders and kissed him.

"We owe everything to you! You came at just the right moment. I couldn't have stood it without you! It was wonderful that I knew so instantly that night that I could trust you!"

"You're a part of our lives now and forever!" said Porter with deep feeling.

When they had gone, Burton went to the telegraph-office, where he filed a message Alice had written to her father an-

nouncing her marriage. Then to brook he sent this:

I have known Adventure, and have seen Romance victorious.

Three hours later he had the reply: Thanks and congratulations. Nothing ventured—nothing have. May Adventure and Romance never know defeat.

There was a new and disturbing business in his heart, and he was surprised to find that he shrank from returning to New York and his old way of life. He went to his room with a bunch of time-tables and studied them diligently.

CROWNS OF TIN

(Continued from page 86)

"—it's all experience. If it falls through, come back to me, and I may have something. Even rehearsals in a sketch will help fit you for something better. Anyway, come back before the show goes on the road. The thing to do is to stick to Broadway just as long as there is the slightest foothold. I've seen a lot of promising young actresses lose all their pep before they even got a chance at the Big Time, and then of course it was too late."

"Tell me frankly: do you think I've a chance?" asked Teddy.

"Sure! You've got some stuff in you; you've got health and ambition. They count; but you don't seem to have lived enough to know what you're talking about a good bit of the time. You lack emotional depth; but why worry about that? A woman collects emotional depth soon enough on the stage. Just watch your step that you don't collect it too rapidly."

It was his first and last bit of advice to Teddy March, and almost the only personal remark he had ever made to her.

The rehearsals were at last finished; the sketch was put on at one of the smaller New York vaudeville houses, and it "got across big," as George Cameron expressed it. All of Delancey's prophecies came true. Rupert Norworth was changed immediately from the nagging, unsatisfiable tyrant of the rehearsals into the most enthusiastic of admirers.

AT last Teddy was an actress! True, it was only in a tabloid drama, playing the smaller vaudeville houses in and around New York City, but it was acting, for all that. During the weeks that followed, she often wondered why she never came in contact with the things that she had always supposed were inseparable from life on the stage—Johnnies, champagne-suppers and like myths. After the show the four members of the company would go to some near-by restaurant, where they had a substantial supper of plain food. The others usually had a glass of beer, and Teddy drank milk. Then they all went home on a street-car and slept until ten the next day if there was a matinee to be played, or later if there was no work until evening. She and the Camerons stayed on at their old rooming-house on Forty-fifth Street, and Rupert Norworth lived somewhere near in the same neighborhood—she never knew exactly where.

The sketch was one of those untrue-to-life, dramatic things that somehow or other please the public—a combination of ten minutes of tragedy, five minutes of comedy and an ending of five minutes more of sentiment and romance. The Camerons were on the stage at the opening; Teddy came on next; two minutes later came Norworth's cue; and Teddy and Norworth were on alone at the finish, the Camerons only coming back for bows—which George Cameron accepted with all the dignity of the Booth school in which he had been trained, and Delancey took with all the sprightly coquetry of her unquenchable youth.

Each night Norworth stood with Teddy at the wings, waiting for her entrance-cue. He stood very close to her and held her arm. This was natural enough. They both wanted to watch, and neither must be seen from the front. Even after he put his arm about her waist, Teddy thought nothing about it, having by this time seen enough of back-stage and dressing-room life to convince her that such demonstrations were meaningless.

ONE night Norworth asked her to go to a matinee with him next day. Teddy accepted gratefully. It was a good play by representative actors, and she was anxious to see them work. It seemed strange to her that Norworth did not share her interest. He talked to her not only during intermissions but also violated the unwritten laws of the profession by talking while the curtain was up.

"How'd you like to team up with me next season?" he was saying when the curtain fell on the second act. "I got a great idea for a boy-and-girl act that'll make the Big Time. Tabloid dramas are all right, but you've got to put all your money out in props and salaries. In the new act there'll be nothing but costumes, and the money would all go to us fifty-fifty."

For a moment Teddy made no reply. "Not afraid, are you?" continued Norworth. "You got no reason to be. I've never pulled any rough stuff with you. I know a lady when I see one. That's why I like you. You're a hard worker, and you got talent. With me to train you, there's no distance you can't go. Whadya say?"

Teddy looked at him. His brushed back hair was smooth and shining; with just the right touch of gray over the tem-

ples. His clothing was well-tailored, features all that could be desired. He spent his life in almost any other way she would have thought him thirty years old. He was really almost forty.

"I think I'll have to know more definitely what your offer is before I answer," said Teddy.

"For the present it's just a plain, business offer; let the future take care of itself, is the way I look at things."

He regarded her closely; and an expression that Teddy did not like came into his eyes.

"I bet you got a sweetheart back home and you're worrying about what he thinks?" he said.

"No, I have no sweetheart—back home." Norworth caught the implication of her last words.

"Oh, you've got one here, then. I say you're clever at keeping him out of sight. My offer stands just the same. I don't care about the past. What interests me is the present—and the future. He looked at her significantly at the last words.

"Don't let any piker from back home or anyone here in New York, either, stand in your way. If you're after the Big Time and the big money, follow me, girlie, and I'll show you how to get it."

He seemed to assume that Teddy had already fallen in with his plans, and he did not trouble to give him a definite refusal. After all, next season was a long way off, and his act might never materialize. It wasn't even written yet. He was working on it, he said.

WHEN they stood at the wings that night, waiting for Teddy's cue, he tried to stand as far away from him as possible, but he put his arm around her waist as usual, except that this time he held her close. A year ago she would have pushed him away with unconcealed displeasure. Now she only stood passive. There were a number of people back there who could see them, but no one would pay any particular attention. It was no affair of theirs. Even her business experience had taught her that careless, like words of endearment, were as profuse as they were harmless back-stage, and any girl who resented them, so long as they didn't go "too far," was decidedly silly. So she stood passive, wishing he would go away, but not daring to say anything.

Suddenly, just as her cue came, he went down and kissed her, and for the first time in her life she knew what it was to "go up in her lines." For several seconds she could not remember what he had to say, and had it not been for the balcony Cameron's quick rescue, the "act" would have been broken up. It lasted a minute; and afterward, when Norworth came on, Teddy was surprised to find that she was playing up to him better than ever before. The idea of making love on the stage to this man who was really interested in her and whom she must keep at a distance had stirred up her emotions and awakened all the latent drama in her nature. She did not like him, but his admiration, and the danger of the situation, made her alive to her own emotions and possibilities for emotion. She felt her audience that night had made them feel her. Lines that had never before elicited applause "got a hand."

After the show the four went to their accustomed restaurant for supper. They were all exhilarated with the evening's success. Norworth said little, but the expression in his eyes told her that her problem had grown twice as big in those twenty minutes on the stage. He knew now that she could act, and for that reason she was twice as well worth winning as before.

It was the knowledge of these things that made her decide that the time had come to call on Thurston. She knew that she could not continue much longer with Norworth. She also knew that she could not. The time had come to use her step-by-step method.

At eleven o'clock the following morning she presented herself at Thurston's office. The room she entered was bare except for a desk and seats running around two sides, on which were seated about fifteen of those men and women who can be found waiting in the outer offices of theatrical producers from ten o'clock to five o'clock on any day of the year from August to May. On the flat-topped desk in the center of the room was a telephone, with a boy presiding over it. He shoved toward her a pad of blank forms. She looked at the pad, one of those printed slips asking for name, nature of business and so forth.

"That isn't necessary; give him this card," she said.

The boy looked up wearily and took the card.

"It's his own," he said, glancing at it.

"Of course; he gave it to me. My own name is written there also. Just take it, please."

The boy rose with another weary movement and passed through a door on the opposite side of the room. She had given him the card Thurston had given her over a year ago at the Lodge.

"Will he remember?" she wondered.

In another moment the boy opened the door again and looking at Teddy, jerked his thumb backward toward it. She was conscious of the fast beating of her heart as she moved in the direction indicated by that jerked-back thumb—conscious of many other things as well: of her Midwestern background, of the Lodge and Larry, of her work in the sketch, and

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most keenly and comfortingly of all the fact that she was well dressed. The boy waited and closed the door after her. She found herself in a large room furnished more like the library of a private house than an office in a New York skyscraper. It was not until later that she realized that there was nothing unnecessary in the room—only the rug, the mahogany desk with its numerous buttons, the ornate reading-lamp, the chairs and the books and pictures, one of which had some bearing on Thornton's profession.

Mr. Thurston had risen at his desk when she entered, but he did not come forward to meet her. He stood there looking just as she had seen him look a dozen times before in the Lodge—maculate, almost dapper in appearance, his thin face grave and quiet, his eyes glowing under the long, womanish lashes. A turquoise ring adorned the little finger of the well-formed hand which he extended to her as she walked across the room.

"So you have come at last?" he smiled.

"Yes, I have come at last."

"Sit down and tell me all about it. I expected you sooner."

"That's encouraging; I feared you might have forgotten all about me." She seated herself in the chair which was drawn close to his own at the big desk.

There were very few interruptions as she told her story. He listened attentively until she had quite finished.

"So you have been training with Dr. Smith. He won't waste time with people who are entirely hopeless. In a way, I think you were wise not to come to me before, though I should have been glad to see you. But I might have been tempted to give you something before you were ready for it. I'll telephone Dr. Smith and see what he says about you. What theater are you playing now?"

She gave him the name of the theater. "If you have time, perhaps you could drop in there some night this week and see me work for yourself," she added.

"I intend to do that," he said, "but I prefer that you should not know exactly when I am coming. It might make you nervous. Come in and see me again next week sometime." He consulted a little book on his desk. "Tuesday at eleven o'clock, if that is convenient."

"I'll be here," she said. "And thank you."

She rose as she spoke, realizing with a sense of surprise and relief that the interview was ended. Many conversations with Delancey Cameron, and others of her kind, as well as her preconceived ideas about the stage, had led her to believe that success was largely a matter of "pull," "paying the price" and other vague phrases full of untold meaning both to the Delancey Camerons of the world and to the members of the sewing-circle of Middleport. Added to this, the stories she had heard about Thurston had led her to believe that he was a dangerous man. Yet he had treated her with a dignified combination of courtesy and kindness, and while his attitude had been friendly, it had also been businesslike. She began to suspect that talent and work had something to do with success on the stage.

stage as well as in other lines of endeavor, and that the kindness of a theatrical producer might sometimes be disinterested.

THE week was a trying one for Teddy. She had to keep Rupert Norworth good-natured and at the same time keep him at a distance. She contrived to keep the Camerons with them after the show each night, but it was not so easy to refuse his invitations for the afternoons. One thing helped her: the fact that Rupert Norworth knew she had been on the stage only a short time, and that she came from a small town. She had told him very little about her San Francisco experience. He attributed her coldness to the fact that she was young and inexperienced, perhaps a bit shy as well.

Teddy allowed Norworth to believe that she was willing to go out in the new vaudeville act with him, without making any definite promise to that effect. He believed that when they were alone her attitude toward him would be quite different. He rather admired what he considered her restraint. He believed implicitly in his attraction for women. When they should be on the road later, he figured, they would be constantly thrown on each other for society. There would be no Delancey Camerons. Teddy would also be dependent on him for work. Her material interests and her natural inclinations would work together for his benefit. He was genuinely fond of her, but he could afford to wait.

Teddy was perhaps not altogether honest even with herself. In her secret heart she knew that she was counting absolutely on getting work in New York through Thurston. She was merely deceiving Rupert Norworth so that she need not break with him until she had secured another engagement.

Her conscience did not trouble her about the deception, but it was not so clear when she thought of Norworth's frequent stolen kisses behind the wings, or at the door of her dressing-room, where he sometimes waited to have a few words alone with her. When he was not looking, she would rub those kisses off her lips, but it was not so easy to erase them from her mind.

One night after she had had a cocktail at dinner (cocktails were still rare enough in her life to have some effect), she half responded to his kiss. It would not have been so bad if she had not seen in his eyes that he felt the response and was triumphant over it. She had been taught to believe that kisses were not to be lightly given or received, and the thought that she had kissed this man, whom she did not love, whom she almost disliked, at times, made her angry with herself.

That night she did not sleep well. She thought of Norworth's kisses and where they were leading her. Hers were the thoughts of youth, grossly exaggerated thoughts. She didn't love Rupert Norworth; yet she had allowed him to kiss her. Once she had kissed him in return. She was immoral. She thought of Uncle Jim's letter, in which he told her that she would make sacrifices for her ambition, and wondered if he had thought of situations like the present when he wrote.

She thought of Larry too, and their kiss in the moonlight that had been so wonderful. Her conscience had not hurt her then. Perhaps, after all, she had loved Larry. She felt very old and sophisticated and tired.

Next morning Teddy decided that a long walk was just what she needed. She breakfasted on a cup of coffee and some rolls at a cheap little restaurant on Eighth Avenue. She had early learned to practice the small economies of the other members of her profession; expensive food must not be eaten unless some one else paid. Money must be saved for clothing and for the long waits between engagements that sometimes come to the most experienced actresses.

SHE walked rapidly to Central Park. The sun was shining brightly; the red-winged blackbirds were singing in her heart.

The trees brought a different mood. She was still radiantly happy, but her happiness no longer needed to be expressed in motion. She was conscious of having walked rapidly and of being a bit tired. "It shows how much I needed the exercise," she thought as she seated herself on a bench near some playing children. To-morrow was Saturday. That meant another matinée. Then Monday—and Tuesday she would see Thurston. Surely he would get her a better engagement, and she would escape from the awkward situation with Norworth. She was so deeply absorbed in her own thoughts that she did not see a man coming up the path until he stopped in front of her seat and stood looking down at her. His gaze drew her eyes:

"Larry!"

In a second she was on her feet and he was holding both her hands in his. They were both talking at once, incoherent, broken-off phrases at first, until Teddy, regaining her poise, sat down again, laughing.

"Let's sit here a minute and get accustomed to seeing one another. We can't arrive anywhere, talking as we are now," she said.

"How well you're looking! But a bit thin," she continued, and she noted that his clothing, while neat and well-kept, was also worn and thin. She remembered the suit—one he had worn at the Lodge.

"You are also looking well, and also a bit thin, but it's very becoming. You are growing beautiful. I feared as much at the Lodge." He was smiling, but the admiration in his eyes made the jest earnest.

"Now tell me all about yourself. Why did you leave the Lodge, and why don't you write to your father and tell him where you are?"

Then Larry told her the story of that day at the Lodge when their father had released them from their promise and sent them out into the world to "win their tin crowns."

"I've wanted to write to him dozens of times, but I know that he wouldn't like it," said Larry.

"He can't get angry at me for telling him that I've met you and that you're well, when I write next time," said Teddy, "and I shall do that to-day."

"I wish you would. He's been on my

How I Saved \$200 on My Family's Clothes

By HARRIET FULLER MARTIN



Just about a year ago I made a discovery that has proved such a wonderful help to us in meeting the rising cost of living that I believe the readers of Red Book will be interested in hearing about it.

There are five in our family and last Spring, just

as I began to figure how many new things to wear the children and I needed, I found that other actual necessities, because of increased prices, were using up nearly all our income—the clothes problem was a *real* one.

I had just about decided that we would have to get along with last year's clothes and only one or two new dresses, when one day I ran across the story of the Woman's Institute—and the new practical, home-study method it has developed by which any woman, no matter where she may live, can learn, during spare time, right in her own home, to plan and make all kinds of dresses and hats.

Of course, at first I was skeptical. But it seemed such a wonderful opportunity that I wrote for full information. After investigating the Institute thoroughly, I joined and took up Dressmaking.

Well, I didn't have the *slightest* trouble! Every step is so clearly explained that almost before I realized it, I was actually making simple garments. There are nearly 2,000 wonderful illustrations, showing just exactly how to do everything that could possibly cause anyone difficulty!

Gradually I learned how to draft my own patterns and plan and completely make waists, suits, and coats for myself and the children, copy models I saw on the street or in fashion magazines and still add the little touches that give a garment distinctiveness.

Beside that I learned how to remodel clothing from previous seasons into stylish new garments and this helped wonderfully! As a family we have never dressed so well—and I have saved nearly \$200 since last spring!

My husband is just as delighted as I am and my neighbors call me "resourceful." But all the credit is due the Woman's Institute! What I have done, any woman, anywhere can do!

More than ten thousand women and girls have already joined the Institute and taken up dressmaking or millinery. Many have since opened shops of their own.

Every woman who is wondering where the family's clothes money is coming from, should at least find out about this wonderful new plan. Simply send a letter, postcard or the convenient coupon below, stating which subject interests you most. The full story of the Woman's Institute and the experiences of thousands of its members will come to you by return mail.

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Please send me one of your booklets and tell me how I can learn the subject marked below:

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Name _____

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conscience quite a bit, and you can give him news of the other boys as well. Brampton is here with me, and you know that Joe and Jimmy are in San Francisco. By the way, it's funny you didn't run across them there."

FOR the first time there was a pause in the conversation. It did not occur to Teddy to lie about having seen Joe and Jimmy in San Francisco, and she did not like to tell Larry.

He saw the indecision in her face.

"What did you do in San Francisco, anyway, and what are you doing here?" he asked.

He listened quietly while she told the story of those first weeks in San Francisco, even to the restaurant-experience, and of how she had been compelled to move to the cheap room on LaNoyades Street without leaving her address at her old boarding-house.

"So that's why my last letter was returned to me," he interrupted. "And now tell me of your subsequent rise to prosperity," he added, with a comprehensive look at her costume.

"That's not so easy," said Teddy. "I'm half afraid you'll disapprove as Joe did."

"Then you did see Joe?"

"Yes, and he disapproved of my mode of life, but I'll tell you, anyway." And she did—all about the swim around Seal Rock and the resulting motion-picture work. She watched his face as she talked, and delighted in the look of admiring disapproval on it—disapproval of the danger, and admiration for her nerve; and realizing that here were sympathy and understanding, she went on to the present, omitting nothing except the situation with Norworth and her interview with Thurston. She remembered that Larry had seemed not to like Thurston. It would be time enough to mention his name when she got the new engagement.

"You must come to the show to-night and see me," she finished.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that. Probably Brampton can, though. He's working on *The Herald*, and unless he has some special assignment, he'll come. I know he'll want to see you."

"Why can't you come too?"

"Because, my child—"

She had noticed this paternal air before in his speech and attitude. She had half expected to patronize him as a woman of the world; and instead, he was acting as if he were years older and knew a great deal more of the world than she, in spite of her experiences. She rather liked it.

"I earn my living by playing the violin in Nealy's," he ended with a little smile that wrinkled up the corners of his eyes. "Now, what do you think Joe would say to that?"

"There aren't any words to express it," she said, shaking her head with mock gravity. "How can you, the brother of the sporting-goods king of the West,—I suppose that's what Joe means to be,—disgrace your family by playing the violin in a tango-restaurant? I'm ashamed of you, Larry. It's easy enough to forget a cousin, but it isn't so easy to dispose of a brother."

"That idea of the sporting-goods king isn't so far wrong. Joe and Carleton are

really making rather a big thing of it. 'Carleton and Straight,' you know; and as for poor Jimmy, I'm afraid the poor lad isn't getting very much out of it for himself. He's not a partner. But if he chooses to spend his entire life as Joe's satellite, it is no affair of mine."

They walked down Fifth Avenue together, and Larry promised to send Brampton to see the show that night. He himself would call for her Sunday morning, and they would go somewhere together. They would make it a real holiday. As she ran up the two flights of stairs to her room, the red-winged blackbirds were singing in her heart.

She must tell some one the wonderful news, and so she told Delancey Cameron. That lady was very much interested and pleased.

"Lots of women marry their cousins," she said. "Of course, some people don't believe in it, and in some States there are laws against it, but I don't know as it's so unwise. It's done a lot in England. Then too, he's in the profession. That's an advantage."

"Not exactly—he's a violinist," said Teddy.

"That makes it all the better. You can go into vaudeville together. If you could only sing a bit, now—"

So she went on interminably, planning Teddy's future until that young person wished she had never mentioned Larry's name.

THAT night at the theater she did not mention Larry to Norworth. Instead she told him of her cousin Brampton Straight, who was going to see her after the show.

"I've heard that cousin stuff before," said Norworth suspiciously.

"It's true this time," said Teddy. "Wait and see. I'll introduce you, and we'll all go to supper afterwards."

"All right," said Norworth. "He's on a newspaper, you say?"

"Yes, *The Herald*."

"He'll be useful to us, then. Get him to put across some press-stuff for us when we start out in the new act."

The words grated on Teddy. Couldn't people meet without wanting to use each other? She forgot for the moment that she was using Rupert Norworth and that she was planning to use Thurston. She had even used Delancey Cameron, who had taught her how to make up, how to save money and a thousand other things so trivial in themselves and so important in the aggregate that there was no measuring them.

She tried to find Brampton in the audience but failed, and feared that he might not have been able to come, after all. But he was waiting for her after the show. It was good to see his round, flushed face, crowned by the light-brown hair that he had at last trained to lie almost smooth. He kissed her loudly on both cheeks and covered the ensuing embarrassment by a gratifying enthusiasm about her appearance, her work and his pleasure at seeing her again.

Teddy introduced him to her coworkers, after which the conversation was general and not entirely satisfying either to her or Brampton. They all had supper together as Teddy had planned, and Rupert

Norworth stayed with them until they reached her door. Here they stopped for good nights, and Norworth was reluctantly forced to take his departure.

"Say, what's the matter with that fellow? He acts as if he owned you, Teddy. He must have an awful crush," said Brampton as he walked away.

The Camerons were already halfway up the high brownstone steps of the house, and Brampton and Teddy were alone.

"Of course not—at least, I don't think he has a crush, as you call it. I just work for him. He's the manager."

"Well, anyway, now that we're rid of him at last, let's go to some regular place and talk. I haven't had a chance to say anything at all to you."

The Camerons were waiting for her at the door, and she called up to them that she was not coming in just yet. Brampton then proceeded to shock all her stage-learned tenets of economy by taking her to one of those to-be-shunned expensive places on Broadway where night begins in the morning and day begins about four o'clock in the afternoon.

THEY succeeded in getting a table in a corner, and Brampton glowed and enthused about the future that he saw coming for them all.

"It's wonderful the way we're all forging ahead," he said. "There's Larry—his success is really unusual. At first we both got rather low. Larry's money was all gone before he landed that job at Nealy's. Of course, he's too good for that sort of work; it would have been easier to get work of that sort if he had been just one of these dance-music violinists; there isn't much of a field for the high-brow music. Then too, he was so much interested in his opera that we both forgot that it costs money to live, and for several months he didn't even try to get work. Now he's getting a good salary, and the opera is almost finished."

"I didn't know about the opera, Brampton; Larry didn't tell me." Her tone was a bit grieved.

"It wasn't that he didn't want you to know. It's just his modesty. It's going to be the most successful light opera ever produced in America. It's sure to go, just as you are sure to become a star. We'll show Dad that our crowns are pure gold, after all. I'm glad you write to him. I've been tempted to write so many times, especially after I got work, but of course that wouldn't do. He told us not to write, and we can't."

Again Teddy marveled at the dominion of Uncle Jim over his sons. Across the continent his will ruled them as effectively as it had ruled them in the lonely lodge in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

"And you, Brampton? What great future have you planned?" she asked.

"I don't say much about it, Teddy, but I don't mind telling you. Of course, my work on *The Herald* isn't much, but it brings me in touch with people—wild life." He paused.

"I know it sounds impractical to you," he continued, "but it isn't to one who understands the intellectual trend of the times." He paused again and sipped his drink, while Teddy waited, wondering where his words were leading.

"I am going to be a really great poet."

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"I'm sorry,
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face darkened.
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"I want,"
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At her door
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Weariness
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in her heart,
and she sank
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as soon as
her head touched
the pillow, and
dreamed that
she was a
leading woman
in a play
managed by
Mr. Thurston.
Rupert Norworth
was playing
opposite her;
and Thurston,
Larry and
Brampton were
all waiting at
the stage-door
to kiss her.
She was very
troubled.

In the next
installment,
in the May
issue, Miss
Judson shows
how the best-
laid plans
sometimes do
work out.

"Yes," said Teddy. She was not surprised. He was so young, so much in earnest, that there was no trace of amusement on her face.

Brampton tumbled in an inside pocket and drew forth a much worn copy of a thin magazine—one of those new-art affairs that flourish in the dusty garrets around Washington Square.

"I've got a little thing in here," he said. "It isn't much, but it's a start, and I'll be breaking into the big magazines soon. I've no patience with those people who think that one can't write good things and be successful too."

Teddy could see at first glance that it wasn't free verse, and she felt relieved; but aside from its advantages of rhyme and rhythm, there was nothing particularly good about it.

"You like it?" questioned Brampton. "Yes," she answered. It was a lie, but what are pearls of truth compared to those jewels of kindness that so often find their setting in a white lie?

"Why don't you write the lyrics for Larry's opera?" she asked.

"Larry suggested that himself, but I decided against it," he said. "You see, I am unknown, and so is Larry. I'm sure of Larry; and I'm sure of myself too, in a way; but I don't want to spoil even the smallest chance of Larry's success. We must win out, each by himself, and then after I succeed, we can work together. His lyrics must be written by some one who already has a reputation."

"Does Larry know why you refused?" "Of course not. He wouldn't have listened to that sort of excuse. I told him I didn't think I was up to the sustained effort, or something like that."

"Do you realize that it's two o'clock and that I must get some beauty-sleep? There's a matinee to-morrow."

"I'm sorry, Teddy, but it is so good to see you."

"We'll drink to the future before we go—to the composer, the poet, the actress and even to the sporting-goods kings of the West. I guess those four will completely rout Uncle Jim's misanthropic attitude toward life."

Brampton's face darkened. "Larry told me about your seeing Joe. I can't understand him. Jimmy is not so much to blame, but I've a good mind to cut Joe from my list."

"Don't be too hard on him, Brampton. He is only pursuing his ambition," said Teddy, unconsciously quoting Uncle Jim. "I want," said Brampton. "One can't be too hard on that sort of thing. It was yellow."

At her door he again insisted on exercising his cousin's right to kiss her, and promised to come to the theater as often as his work permitted.

Weariness had stilled the song of the red-winged blackbirds in her heart, and she sank into a troubled sleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillow, and dreamed that she was a leading woman in a play managed by Mr. Thurston. Rupert Norworth was playing opposite her; and Thurston, Larry and Brampton were all waiting at the stage-door to kiss her. She was very troubled.

In the next installment, in the May issue, Miss Judson shows how the best-laid plans sometimes do work out.

"More Corns Than Ever But They Do Not Stay" The Story That Millions Tell

THIS is not a way to prevent corns. That would mean no dainty slippers, no close-fitting shoes. And that would be worse than corns.

Our plea is to end corns as soon as they appear. Do it in a gentle, scientific way. Do it easily, quickly, completely, by applying a Blue-jay plaster.

Modern footwear creates more corns than ever. But have you noted how few people ever evidence a corn?

The chief reason lies in Blue-jay. It is ending millions of corns each month. Instantly, for every user, it puts a quietus on corns.

The procedure is this: Attach a Blue-jay at the first sign of a corn. It will never pain again. Let it remain two days, and the corn will disappear. Occasionally, an old, tough corn needs a second application. But that's an easy matter, and the corn is sure to go.

This is the modern method. Old, harsh, mussy methods are long out-of-date. Paring, of course, is dangerous.

Here a gently-acting wax is centered on the corn alone. The corn is protected in the meantime, and the wrapping fits like a glove.

It's the expert way of dealing with a corn, and everyone should employ it.

Try it tonight. Note the results on a single corn. In a few hours you will know that corns are needless. Never again will you pare or pad them, or treat them in old-time ways. And never again will you let a corn spoil an hour of joy.

BAUER & BLACK

Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc.
Chicago and New York



B&B
Blue-jay
For Corns

**Stops Pain Instantly
Ends Corns Completely**
25c Pkg. at Druggists

How Blue-jay Acts



"A" is a thin, soft pad which stops the pain by relieving the pressure.
"B" is the B&B wax which gently undermines the corn. Usually it takes only 48 hours to end the corn completely.
"C" is rubber adhesive which sticks without wetting. It wraps around the toe, to make the plaster snug and comfortable.
Blue-jay is applied in a jiffy. After that, one doesn't feel the corn. The action is gentle, and applied to the corn alone. So the corn disappears without soreness.

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THE LONDON SCHOOL
of Illustrating and Cartooning
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Don't overlook—
the announcement on page 61. It contains news of great interest to you.

NERVE FORCE

A keen nervous system is the most precious gift of Nature. To be dull nerved, means to be dull brained—insensible to the higher things in life. In your nerves there lies your greatest strength, and therefore your greatest weakness. If you are tired, depressed, nervous, irritable, cannot sleep and digest your food, it means that your nerve force is depleted.

Paul von Boeckmann, the Nerve Culturist, has written a remarkable book which explains how to soothe, nourish and calm the nerves. Price of the book is 25 cents (coin or stamps).

If after reading this book you do not agree that it is the most valuable Health Treatise you have ever studied, return the book and your money will be refunded.

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50c Box of Compact Rouge**

Sent absolutely free with order for full size dollar box of Juanita Face Powder (fresh, white or brunette) — a powder that imparts to the skin that delicate softness and refinement much admired. Delicately perfumed, adheres readily and positively. Only one order to each person. The box of Juanita Compact Rouge (light, medium or dark) contains a genuine Australian 1/2 oz. of 1/2 oz. Puff, also a mirror. Juanita Almond Cream has no equal for cleansing and massage.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

This offer is to introduce the Juanita toilet specialties, but we will promptly refund your dollar if you do not feel absolutely satisfied. Mention shade of powder and rouge wanted. Send \$1 today. Returned if dissatisfied.



F. HERNO CO.
542 E. 32d Street, Chicago

THE SIDE-SHOW GIRL

(Continued from
page 44)

and beginning to canvass the possibilities of immediate action.

"Pack up!" directed Chauncey.

Freda extracted a grass suit-case from under the bed and began to dust it. "Run away now, and come back in an hour," she ordered.

"Oh, but can't I help?" presumed Chauncey.

"No, you can't," blushed Freda; and then she inquired with fresh anxiety: "But how are we going to get out of here? Mamma has eyes like a hawk."

"Easiest thing!" declared the gilded idler. "Get the suit-case packed, and then when the crowd's so thick neither your mother nor Joe could possibly notice, I'll take it out and plant it in the tonneau. Then you get into your street-clothes and walk out—that's all there is to it."

But getting into Freda's street-clothes did not prove so easy. The famous beach-resort was full of people. It was a reaping time with Gallagher's. Swannick kept the girl getting on and off the bally-box all the afternoon and evening. Chauncey did get the suit-case out, but that was as far as the plan seemed to work till desperation had seized the girl and she decided to fly to Miss Henrietta Ewing in what department-stores call "as is"—that is to say, in her present apparel; and her present apparel was dancing clothes.

It was then after eleven o'clock at night, and Swannick had put Freda on for a final combing of the crowds coming out of the steeplechase and Luna. Chauncey stood casually in front with the mustard-colored cloak upon his arm. The bally-hoo finished his last burst of husky oratory and turned down from the box; Freda stepped to the front of it, leaped lightly down into the arms of her Lochinvar, was wrapped in the long coat, and tripped across the pavement to the waiting car. Swannick and the ticket-taker saw her go, but this was a replica of so many of her other departures with Chauncey that to neither of them did it carry any hint of the true purpose of two earnest young souls.

TO Freda this swift, silent midnight ride was like a dash into another world—the existence of that other world being confirmed when the automobile, after threading some miles of a city's streets, turned in at the side of a great square-shouldered mansion and drew up at the garage door.

"This time of night it's better to go in the back way," said Chauncey, looking up at the lightless windows. "Wait here, and I'll slip in and tell a maid to get your room ready."

"Certainly," assented Freda, who with resolution held firmly to the point of action, was on her most ladylike behavior.

"My aunt isn't home," announced Chauncey, a trifle breathless and appearing suddenly on the ground at her side. "Gone back to the St. Lawrence. What's more, there isn't a servant round—not even Parkyns, the butler. Whole crew of 'em cleaned out for the night. They'll be on deck to get breakfast for me though," he added reassuringly.

Putting all these coincidences together, this was either very strange or a remarkable convergence of the untoward. Perhaps for one alarming moment Freda doubted, and perhaps Chauncey, seeing her hand clutch tightly at the side of the car, sensed this doubt.

"Tell you," he proposed hopefully: "I'll put you in my aunt's room for to-night, and to-morrow we'll decide what to do next. I'll sleep in the garage myself."

This reassured Freda and touched her, but she was not a coward and did not like to seem a prude. The idea of Chauncey Ewing, with all those rooms in his house, sleeping in his garage on her account!

"Isn't that being rather—rather particular?" she inquired, blushing in the darkness, because of anxiety not to say the wrong thing.

"Can a young lady be too particular?" rejoined Chauncey in a self-effacing sort of way.

"No, I suppose not," admitted Freda, and to emphasize her intention to accept the hospitality of the aunt's bedchamber so generously extended by proxy, she got out of the automobile.

TAKING the suit-case, Chauncey led the way across a concrete court to a door which he had left standing open, and up a rather narrow stairway, flashing lights on as he went. Freda followed into a large hall containing strange, high-backed, throne-like chairs, and pieces of statuary, and on through a dining-room with a great oval table that was larger than any of which Freda's appetite, often considerable, had ever conceived. She was awed, too, by the glitter of silver on the table and of crystal on the sideboard. Beyond this was a small room in an alcove, also equipped with a table.

"The breakfast-room!" Chauncey announced, dropping the suit-case as if it were an unaccustomed weight. "Are you hungry?"

"I could eat my gloves," confessed Freda.

"Sit down," the young man said, placing a chair.

Freda started to throw off her cape, but realizing suddenly what garb she wore, wrapped the cape around her from the waist and draped it carefully to her heels before sitting down, at the same time looking at Chauncey with a little smile, half apologetic and half appealing. Chauncey reciprocated understandingly.

"Wait here while I skirmish," he directed.

It was the wrong military term, but it produced a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread and a plate of sliced boiled ham.

"Can you cut bread?" Chauncey inquired.

"Yes," assured Freda.

"I can open the milk-bottle," he boasted.

And so they ate, at one o'clock in the morning, ravenously—each a little breathless, each a little awed by the responsibilities of the situation.

Again taking the suit-case, Chauncey once more led the way, this time past a

marble horse prancing on a pedestal to a wide staircase that went up and turned and went up again to another hall with all kinds of rooms opening off it, parlors or drawing-rooms or picture-galleries—Freda's ideas were vague, but the one into which she was conducted, though large, was obviously a sleeping-chamber. On one side of the long room was a bed, a thing of spider legs and snowy lines that managed to suggest both daintiness and dignity. There were tables and chairs also with spider legs, and two upholstered chairs and a couch, each beautiful after its kind, as if designed to comfort the eye as well as the body. Moreover the whole room and all within it was done in soft blue-gray and silver tones that made each detail seem to belong to and be a part of every other detail, just as if all had grown there.

The little girl from the freak-show stood for a moment enraptured yet subdued, her cheap prettiness paling somewhat in the setting. She sensed, too, that this harmony was all made to become some particular type of woman as a freak might become her—that it was the expression of a personality, and this provoked a fresh curiosity about Chauncey.

"And is your room like this?" she asked, turning upon him so suddenly that he was startled by the question and its naïve manner.

"No!" he stammered. "No. Oh, no! Mine is a man's room."

"That is what I meant," she said. "Will you let me see it?"

CHAUNCEY hesitated for a moment and then led Freda out and down the hall to a door at the back, pushed it open and flashed on the lights. Again she saw a huge room, but it was like looking into the store of a dealer in theatrical properties. There was a bed,—a slight bann affair, as if sleeping were of the least importance to the owner of this room,—and there were chairs, heavy leather things, mostly, and thick rugs upon the floor; but they all seemed crowded out of place by the other things with which the room was stuffed. Suits of armor hung or posed about, long bell-mouthed muskets, scimitars, spears like the wild-man's, canoe-paddles, bits of fish-nets, stuffed heads of animals—in short, trophies of sport and art from many fields. Far on one side the door of a bathroom opened, and a set of gymnasium apparatus was in evidence.

Again the girl was awed. Obviously the man who had gathered these things about him, who enjoyed and understood them, was a man of some attainments. Freda, as she gazed at the various interests the room represented, felt herself grow smaller and turned to Chauncey shyly with a new respect for him, for his simplicities and his modesties. Somehow, up to now she had thought of Chauncey as a sort of superficial young person, principally admirable for his good intentions and amiable nature. Now she had a different feeling and regarded him wonderingly as they moved back along the hall to the room that was to be hers to-night.

"If anything alarms you, touch that button there," directed Chauncey. "It will ring a bell in the garage, and I will come double-quicking. Good night and pleasant dreams."

Freda, again under the spell of this beautiful room, and absorbed by her thoughts, hardly realized that he was going, but roused in time to kiss a playful maid to him as he went out of the door, and listened for his footsteps until she heard them when a door slammed somewhere below. She did not unpack much—only the blue-ribboned nightgown and a purple-and-cerise kimono of Chinese silk, cheap and gorgeous—her one boudoir garment, to confess the truth. Then she addressed and with experimental slowness extended herself between the sheets and gave her tired young body up to the luxury of a bed that was neither soft nor hard but received her gently to its bosom and lulled her speedily to sleep.

When Freda woke, with a stretch and yawn, daylight was streaming beneath the curtains and recognition of the surroundings brought her upright with a little gasp. Then she stretched again, in sheer nervous excitement, and one slim foot stole outward to the rug. It was her understanding that fine ladies, on arising, hang for their maid, that the maid drew the bath, perfumed it and announced: "Madam, the bath is ready."

"There was a silver bell on a tiny onyx table beside the bed. Freda rang it and then, skipping out from her nest in the snowy linen, answered it herself.

"Oui, madame?"

"My bath, Marie!" she directed in languid tones, then ventured into that sunny room with all its glittering nickel and shiny tiling and turned on the water-tap.

MISS HENRIETTA EWING, having arranged to turn over her Thousand Islands home to Canadian convalescents from the hospitals of France, and being crowded out of doors suddenly by the unexpectedly early arrival of a contingent of wheel-chairs and on crutches, left her housekeeper and maids to assist in making the new arrivals comfortable while she, her butler and her personal maid took the night express for New York. The train was delayed somewhere to the north of Albany, and as a chauffeur failed to meet her at the Grand Central Station, she arrived at her home in a taxi and in ill humor.

Parkyn assisted my lady to alight, and with armfuls of suit-cases staggered up the front steps. With arms full of a Germanian on a cushion the maid followed. Parkyn produced a key and opened the front door. Tall, prim and dark, and tailored in gray, my lady stepped in and sniffed.

"Dead air!" she announced with added displeasure. "Chauncey has not had the house open in a week."

Parkyn picked up from under the door the yellow slip which announced an undelivered telegram offered the night before. Miss Henrietta looked at the offensive yellow slip irritably and then, with a general glance about, piloted her footsteps toward the peaceful haven of her own room. She entered to be out-ward, not to say appalled, by the sight of a cheap corset hanging over the back



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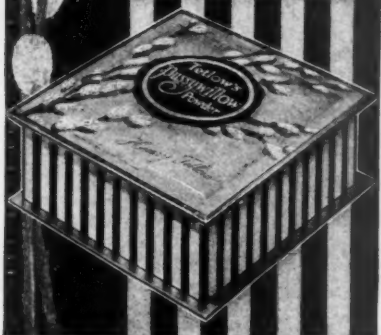
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of one of her Chippendale chairs. Upon another appeared a nested flock of ruffles somewhat beyond her comprehension, while the couch boasted extra decorations in the way of a short and spangled skirt. A pair of black patent-leather pumps, some gold stockings and other odds and ends of garments which Miss Henrietta began now to think she recognized as items of chorus-girl apparel, lay strung about. The bed gave evidence of having been slept in.

"Well, did I ever?" inquired Miss Ewing with a gasp, turning a bewildered face toward her maid.

At this moment a sound of luxurious paddling arose in the bathroom, and Miss Henrietta took a hasty step in that direction, confirmed her fears and screamed—not loudly but as a perfectly well-bred expression of dismay and indignation too great for the coherence of words. Immediately the paddling ceased, to be followed by sounds of dripping water, and presently there appeared in the doorway a slender figure wrapped in one of Miss Henrietta's own linen-crash bathrobes.

"You're—you're Miss Ewing?" suggested a scared voice.

"I thought I was!" exclaimed Miss Ewing, with sarcasm. "What brought you here—disgraceful creature?"

Freda straightened and drew the bathrobe tighter about her.

"Mightn't you be mistaken about calling me that name?" she inquired with a slight toss of her round little chin, while the dark eyes stared unflinchingly.

This question and the mild but sure reproof in it steadied Miss Henrietta somewhat and unmasked the nobler side of her nature.

"I might—yes," she admitted. "But explain yourself, young woman. How do you come here?"

"Chauncey brought me."

"Chauncey? That boy?" There were distress-notes in the lady's voice. "What would his mother say! Whatever has that boy come to!"

"Well, if this is the worst he's come to, it can't be so very bad," suggested Freda loyally, at the same time managing a smile that was faint but appealing.

"But to—to bring you here—of all places!"

"Where should he bring me but to his home?"

THIS question carried with it an implication that was staggering, but Miss Henrietta could not bring herself to seek its confirmation now. While she hesitated, Freda asked:

"May I put something on? I'll be uncomfortable pretty soon if I don't."

Miss Ewing was a reasonable person, and no matter how preposterous the situation, this was a reasonable request.

"Jane," she directed stiffly, "give this young woman her clothes and help her to get something on."

"Not those!" gasped Freda as the maid bore down with gingerly air upon the fluffy ruffles and the spangled skirt. "The suit-case, if you please."

Miss Ewing turned her back, reflecting irritably upon the eccentricities of that Chauncey whom she loved so dotingly, with reservations concerning duty to her own dignity and to this—this child.

"Well!" she exclaimed in some surprise

when Freda again intruded upon her, clothed modestly in a simple two-piece serge. The girl's appearance was surprising, and Miss Henrietta felt a stirring in her heart.

"What is your name?" she asked, the tone was not unkindly. Freda, simple and straightforward ever, and plain, anxious to make an impression that should redeem this horrible situation, felt she was to have a chance as she replied:

"Have you a mother?"

"Frau Goebel, the snake-charmer Gallagher's in Coney."

Miss Ewing, unconsciously withdrawing abruptly from the vicinity of the suit-case, now open on the couch.

"And you?" she inquired apprehensively as prepared to hear the worst concerning one who had slept in her bed. "You're a snake-charmer also?"

"No," smiled Freda. "I do a dance of the bally."

"In the ballet, you mean," corrected Miss Ewing with careful consideration.

"No—on it," insisted Freda.

What use to argue with one so ignorant? Miss Ewing returned to the main point.

"Where did you meet Chauncey?"

"There! He was always hanging round."

"Always?"

"He hasn't missed a day in the weeks," declared Freda.

"Oh, the schemer!" Miss Henrietta's voice rose to something near a whisper, and her eyes sought the maid's as if to bear witness to some important discovery.

"And so that's why he wouldn't come to the Islands but insisted that business be him in town all summer! And are you—"

Miss Ewing cleared her throat and began herself: "Are you married to Chauncey?"

"Married? No!" Freda's answer was emphatic. "He was just a friend."

I wanted to help me. Besides I—I had a man at Coney, but my mother loves him too. She's more unscrupulous than I am. She made him propose to her, and now they're engaged."

The big pained eyes showed that the girl had sustained a real hurt, and the philanthropic Miss Henrietta was considerably moved. No sooner had her own anxiety been relieved than she drew the curtains of farce parting on tragedy.

Besides, Miss Ewing was feeling a lack of respect for the girl. While evidence of the innocent victim of one of Chauncey's absurd impulses, her situation had become most awkward; yet the simple little thing had borne herself admirably.

"Well, that is a pretty how-do-you-do isn't it?" commented Miss Henrietta in tones that managed dexterously to express sympathy for the girl and condemnation for the mother. "And who is the man you love?"

"Joe Holmquist, the strong-man in the show."

"Strong-man! H'mph! And he's your mother outgeneral him?"

"Oh, but Mother can outgeneral anybody," explained Freda dolefully. "She used to be a leopard-tamer till she lost her nerve. Since that it's the snakes—and—and me. She handles us both alike—pets us and keeps us caged. Now she's trying to cage Joe."

Miss Ewing controlled an impulse to laughter.

"My nephew was going to help you?"
 "Yes—to go to business college and study stenography." Miss Ewing was dazed.
 "Stenography?" Miss Ewing was dazed.
 "You can't imagine, Miss—Miss Ewing," said Freda with appeal in her voice, "what the atmosphere of a freak-show is like. Everyone has got something the matter with them. They're not normal; they're monstrosities of some kind so terrible that people will pay money to come and stare at them, and while you'd think they'd get hardened, they never do. They're sensitive, and they brood and crab. There's a little man in our show thirty-two years old and thirty-two inches high. I have never seen him smile. He just stands or sits and broods all day on his little platform. The tones of his voice are the saddest I've ever heard."

"The poor young man!" ejaculated Miss Ewing.
 "Mother's not a freak, of course," went on Freda, "but she don't mind the associations and wants me to stay with her till I get a chance to marry well. She thought I might marry Chauncey, but I couldn't."

"He wanted you to?" inquired Miss Ewing, grim again.

"You might ask him," blushed Freda.
 "I'm grateful to you for not doing so," declared Miss Henrietta, casting about in her mind to know what she might do for the young lady.

"And I did so want to be a stenographer in a bank," bemoaned Freda. "I told Chauncey about it, of course, and he wrote me a letter to-day,—no, yesterday it was,—telling me his scheme for me to come here in the fall and live here as one of your maids and go to school. But I couldn't do that—an artist like me doing housemaid's duties! You see how impossible that would be?"

"Naturally," assented Miss Ewing tactfully.

"And then this afternoon—no, yesterday afternoon," Freda went on, gulping, "I found out about Mamma and Joe, and I had to come away quick. I just had to, Miss Ewing; and Chauncey brought me here. It was late at night, and I don't think he knew quite what to do. I suppose it was awful of him to put me in your room, but he was trying to make me feel right about everything, and I hope you won't mind. I don't think I've hurt anything. And he was such a gentleman! He slept in the garage last night, and he was so surprised when you weren't home."

"Surprised?" sniffed Miss Henrietta.
 "He'll be more surprised when he learns I am home."

WITH that appositeness which happens sometimes in real life, though admittedly less often than in fiction, a penetrating voice just now echoed in the hall, and Miss Henrietta's eye got a peculiarly satisfied gleam in it. Waiting while she timed the progress of footsteps outside, she lifted her voice and called:

"Chauncey, come here!"

A swart-faced young man with bright black eyes, a knobby chin, a bald forehead and a blasé air, entered the room.

"Why, hello, Aunt Etta!" he exclaimed, advancing and kissing her affectionately on the forehead.

He had turned toward the door with



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an expectant smile but now stood non-plused.

"Why, that isn't Chauncey!" she gasped; and then, a little beside herself with shock, bravely confronted the counterfeiter. "You've got on Chauncey's shirt and socks, but you're not Chauncey."

That self-contained young man and his aunt exchanged polite but mystified glances.

"This is my nephew Chauncey Ewing," assured Miss Henrietta, feeling a fresh wave of sympathy for the girl.

"Oh!" Freda murmured, and she sank weakly into a chair.

"Somebody's been masquerading as you, Chauncey," explained Miss Henrietta, "—coming to see the girl every day at Coney Island."

"The rotten beggar!" adjudged Chauncey with cultured indignation. "To tell the truth, Aunt, I just this hour got in from France."

"From France?" Miss Ewing's voice all but failed her for a moment. "Is there anything else preposterous that I am to be asked to believe this morning?" she demanded, when the nervous stricture of her throat had passed.

"It was only that I wanted to spare you worry, Aunt Etta," soothed the young man. "I've been driving ambulance over there. I knew you'd be frightened to death, so all summer long I've been spoofing you, leaving Milton to keep the house open, take care of Cecil and reenclose my letters to you, which were written to read as if 'made in Brooklyn.' Last week they packed me off home because of a little touch of fever. Don't feel hard against me, will you? It was only a—benevolent deception."

While Chauncey was extricating himself from his own mild predicament, Freda had a gleam of inspiration concerning her own. She touched a button she had noticed, marked "Garage."

THE fact was, however, that at this moment there was no one in the garage to hear the bell. True enough, a certain blond young man whose identity was now a matter of doubt had lain down to sleep in one of the chauffeur's beds in the garage at some time about two o'clock in the morning, and he had slept soundly and long. Arising at about the hour of noon, he had been engaged in the knotting about his throat of something that looked like a streamer torn from the *aurora borealis*, when a noise outside attracted his attention.

Glancing from the window, he had been surprised and shocked to see old Parkyn bustling about cutting some late roses, evidently for the luncheon-table. Holy mackerel! The return of Miss Henrietta must be imminent. The young man had dashed wildly down the stairs, shot like a streak across the back court and raced upward noiselessly but two steps at a time, chiding himself with every jump for that excess of hospitality which had led him to domicile Miss Goebel of Coney Island in Miss Henrietta's own room, and planning to abduct her hastily to another chamber while he lay in wait for Miss Ewing and offered his explanation.

But he had found that lady's door ajar and through it voices floating, one of which indicated that he came too late for either purpose. Another of those

voices gave the agitated young man particular pause. It also gave him weakness in the knees as he reflected what garments were upon his back. Yet a lady was in distress—an entirely innocent lady; and eavesdropping only long enough to gather the direction and speed of the wind of conversation, he knocked and stepped in his entry timing closely with Freda touching of the bell.

"CHAUNCEY!" was the girl's first involuntary exclamation—whereat the young man flushed to the roots of his blond hair as his eyes sought not Freda but Miss Ewing.

"This is Milton Wallace, Chauncey," socially gifted chauffeur, explained the lady; and there was an amused crackle of sarcasm in her tones. But along with the words went a kindly glance for Freda and one of accusation for the chauffeur.

"Oh, you—you—" began Freda. But there were the innocent blue eyes of the pseudo-Chauncey, turning toward her with an expression of mild benevolence in them. Instead of reproaching him, she could only stammer and give the real Chauncey an opportunity to demand sternly: "Milton! Have you been wearing my shirts and socks?" At the same time an inquiring eye wandered reminiscently over the details of that young man's confessedly brilliant sartorial array.

But Milton, in his way, was rather sportsmanlike.

"I'm caught with the goods on, Mr. Ewing," he admitted with an embarrassed smile, and then he brightened to argue: "But there's some excuse for me, really. A lot of freaks down at Coney Island wished your name on me one day when I was wearing some clothes you had given me, and after that—well, *noblesse oblige*! Milton relieved himself of a very Gallic gesture. "After that I had to dress the part."

"Why, it's the very truth!" gasped Freda, astonished to recall the exact facts and glad of anything that would enable her to acquit the pseudo-princeling of misconduct. "We deceived ourselves, and he only let us have our way about it. I remember now that when I called him Chauncey the first time he only said: 'Somebody's been guessing.'"

The real Chauncey had turned a significantly inquiring glance at Milton when the girl was speaking.

"Oh, I fell for her, all right," admitted Milton, relapsing for a phrase or two into the very language of chauffeurs. "But she wouldn't fall for me, even when she thought I was heir to a million. I wanted to get her out of that environment, though, so I seized the first occasion and brought her here. I thought it was a case you'd like to help, Miss Ewing, and I hope you'll see what can be done—no matter what happens to me."

There was an appealing drop of the voice on these last words, and Freda took them up like a cue.

"Of course it was wrong of him, Mr. Ewing, to wear your clothes," she said, turning on that young man the full candlepower of some very earnest eyes. "Oh, I did admire those wonderful neckties so!"

A relaxing smile crossed the disfigured features of Mr. Chauncey Ewing, leader of the American Ambulance Corps.

lapped the end of a cigarette meditatively on the side of his silver case.

"It was only a—a benevolent deception, sir," urged Milton in his own behalf. "But I suppose I'm discharged, sir?"

"Discharged? No!" decided young Mr. Ewing, but with tantalizing deliberation. "You're too good a driver. But you're reprimanded—seriously reprimanded, Milton. Understand? And say! Go to my room, take everything of mine you've ever had your hands on—or anything you covet irresistibly—and carry it out to the garage and keep it there. Now, young lady, does that relieve your distress of mind any?"

"Oh, yes sir; you are very kind," murmured Freda.

"Perhaps in time you might even come to think the real Chauncey almost as nice as the fake one," he further unbent to suggest, a little bit as if his pride was touched that a young lady should still have eyes for his chauffeur after once having contemplated him.

"Perhaps," admitted Freda, so doubtfully that Miss Henrietta laughed heartily, while Chauncey's lips parted in a disappointed grin.

"The child is so honest," said Miss Henrietta, "I feel we must do something for her. Would you really like a home while you go to business college?"

"Not—charity," objected Freda with a shake of the head. "Thank you very much, but—"

THE apologetic person of Parkyns appeared in the doorway.

"A lady downstairs, ma'am, accompanied by a gentleman, who insists her daughter is here in the house."

"A—large gentleman?" inquired Freda with great interest.

"He's got shoulders on him like the abutments to a bridge," elaborated Parkyns.

"Mother!" gasped Freda, mixing her sequences.

"Show them up," directed Miss Ewing.

"Freda! Freda!" sobbed the stout woman, rushing upon the girl, her broad face expressing contrition, reproach and forgiveness. "For why you went away? I love you. You can have Joey. Look here at this letter what he wrote you."

Frau Goebel, with tears streaming, produced a letter soiled by the litter of the monkey-cage and worn by the inquisitive fingering of Scipio. "Joey wrote it to you yesterday morning already," explained her mother, tearfully yet hopefully, "but the ape got it."

Freda snatched the missive and read it eagerly from the beginning to the end—Joe's laborious, painful and convincing declaration of his love. And when she had finished, the girl kissed it impulsively and looked up to find Joe standing before her, head slightly on one side, the tender gray eyes beaming, the Cupid's-bow lips parted in a hopeful smile; and though in the presence of strangers, his shyness was much abated.

"Freda!" he exclaimed with a great gulp in his voice as he opened his arms. "I've quit the show. It's the civilized life for us now."

"Joe! Oh, Joe!" she breathed softly and fondly; then she nestled against his strong arms gathered her in.

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A JESTER ON THE BORDER

(Continued from page 68)

without a let-up. By the gray dawn they came to the river, forded it and entering a fringe of chaparral, walked their horses upon American soil. A quarter of a mile inland the Kid halted.

"Remain quietly here," he told her, and as she bowed her assent, he rode off a few yards to one side—then, doubling upon his trail, he returned to the stream. Hiding himself with the craft of his Apache forbears behind a thicket that hugged the trail, he unstrapped his rope and waited with the motionless patience of a cougar beside a runway.

CARLOS, emerging from the river half an hour later, found the fresh prints of two horses' feet leading down one of the paths of the chaparral and took it with infinite caution. He saw by the hoof-prints that the ones he pursued were now walking their horses, and imagining themselves safe. He did not believe that it would be difficult to surprise them; and then— Drawing his revolver and with eyes and ears set at their acutest, he passed slowly down the trail. A hundred yards farther on, he heard something sing like a wasp from behind, and knowing well its meaning, sunk his spurs rowel deep. But though his horse leaped as a flying fish leaves the water, a noose settled around him, binding his arms in a vise-grip to his body. As his animal shot from beneath him, he landed heavily upon his back upon the ground, feeling himself being slowly dragged backward by the cow-pony at the other end of the taut reata. A moment later the Kid, stake-rope in hand, was bending over him.

"No need to get excited, Carlos," he said easily. "While I've got to rope you up a bit, I aint going to hurt you." He picked up the fallen one's revolver and thrust it into his belt; then with a few deft hitches he made the prisoner's arms fast. Next loosening the reata, he raised the captive to his feet.

"I'm going to take you along—need you in my business," he grunted as he boosted Carlos upon the latter's own horse. Then mounting his animal he rode by the other's side, his hand upon the bridle. A quarter of a mile farther on they came upon the girl sitting dejectedly, anxiously awaiting.

"Perro!" she flamed as she rode close before the false one, the lightning playing in her eyes as against a summer storm-cloud. "I should strike you in the face with your treachery—whip you—pull out your *bigotes* which you curl with such vanity. Would that the hag Salazar could see you now!"

Powerless, but with the look of a trapped jaguar upon his face, the victim could but glare in silence. The Kid put himself between them.

"Reckon we'll stop at Ramirez's place a few miles farther on," he announced. "The old man is a friend of mine and will do what I tell him to. You shall have your opportunity to talk to him then, Rosa. For now, silence." Urging their tired horses forward, they slipped along the winding ways of the chaparral. Squatting at the edge of the labyrinth,

crowded close by a jungle of prickly pear and cactus, the *jagal* of the old Mexican came in sight. Arising from a splotch of early-morning sunshine where he had leaned against his little corral, the old man came to meet them with an obsequious doffing of his hat. "It is the Kid!" He bowed humbly. "As ever, I am at his service."

The voice of the captor was terse and threatening.

"You'd better be. I desire to leave in your care for some hours this one whom I have tied up, and also the señorita. You are to look after them until I return. Give them food and water and let them converse, but the man is to remain securely fastened. *Sabe, hombre!*"

Again the old one bowed. "It shall be as you say, señor." The Kid edged his horse close beside that of the wide-eyed girl.

"Listen, Rosa. I must go ahead and make some arrangements. Until I return, you must await me here, but you need have no worry. You are safe, and I am going to make you happy. You trust me?"

Her chin fell. "Yes," she returned slowly. "But you will come back when?"

"Before the day is over. And now—he raised her hand and kissed it—"adieu, and be patient."

STRAIGHT into Rollins and to the house of a friend the Kid rode; he borrowed a fresh horse in place of his jaded one and then passed slowly down the scattering main street of the town. In front of the post office he drew rein. Cassidy, the deputy sheriff, was sitting on a dry-goods box out in front, as were Williams, Ramos—the partner of the murdered Muñoz—and half a dozen others. Speculatively they looked up as he halted. Cassidy spoke.

"Howdy, Kid! Aint saw you for a snake's age." He glanced at the mud upon the other's boots. "Been over the crick, I reckon."

The Kid nodded, saying nothing. "And you see something of Carlos, meebby," broke in Ramos quickly.

The one addressed grinned. "Reckon so, Ramos. Fact is I've got him all safely roped about two hours' ride back there in the chaparral—American side. Thought I'd drop in on you and see if you've still got that thousand dollars' reward on ice."

Cassidy's chin moved up and down the fraction of an inch.

"It's on deposit in my name, Kid. Bring in your meat alive and able to stand trial, and it's yours Johnny-on-the-spot and no palaver. How'd you manage to do it?"

The Kid swung one leg loosely around the horn of his saddle and looked down upon them.

"It was some job, citizens, if I do say it. But I'll tell you about it as we go along. However, here's my proposition: I've got your man back there a few miles as I told you, all in good shape and healthy as a mule's leg. But you've got to come with me to get him."

I want that *dinero* under my chaps before I lead you to him. Any objections?"

Cassidy frowned. "You needn't be afraid of not getting your money if you can deliver the goods. My word for it ought to be enough."

But the other's head began a slow wagging.

"I've got reasons in mind which I will tell you on the way, for wanting you to go after him. Also I want that reward in my pocket. My word is as good as yours, aint it? Produce that thousand, and I'll take you, Williams and Ramos with me to him. That makes three of you to one of me, and my promise on top of it to deliver him up to you as stated or else return the money. Also I agree not to start any rough work if you don't. So if you want him, shell out and come along. And just to convince you, I'll let you all ride behind me."

FOR a minute only they hesitated. The Kid's word was good in such matters, and these days he was upon his good behavior. Also, with the three of them riding behind him, he would have no chance to double-cross them; and they had their natural share of curiosity. At a nod of assent from Ramos they crossed to the bank and drew the money, and the Kid pocketed it with a vast sigh of satisfaction. Then out of town they rode, the captor leading the way and his escort of three riding a dozen yards behind him and closely following his every movement. In the fringe of chaparral a couple of hundred yards from the *jacal* of the old Mexican, the guide halted and turned.

"I trailed Carlos to Juquila, where he had gone to see his girl," he began as he ran his eyes over them. "Then the question was what to do about it. You didn't want him dead; so there was no use in killing him, and of course I couldn't take him out of that country a prisoner. There was only one way to get him out and that was to make him chase me, and there was only one way to make him chase me, and that was to steal his girl. So I did it. I sneaked another woman's handkerchief into his pocket, and she found it there, canned him and eloped with me to spite Carlos. She don't care two whoops for me, and when you tell her all about it, she'll make up with him in a jiffy. I hope they will be happy. You'll find them in old Ramirez's charge a few hundred yards further on. Tell her that it was all my fault and give them my blessing. I only did it because I needed the money." He paused with his black eyes flicking their faces, and Cassidy raised his voice.

"Pretty good work, Kid, and I don't reckon nobody else but you has got the combination to pull such a stunt over across the river. Pity that firearm of yours is so garrulous; otherwise I'd have you appointed a deputy. But it seems to me that you fall down on one of your roscate prognostications. How do you figure they're going to be happy together when we're going to hang Carlos for murder?"

The Kid's face split in a mirthless smile.

"Now I'll tell you about that also. Carlos wasn't within ten miles of Thatcher's ranch on the night of the kill-



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ing, and he won't have any trouble in proving his innocence. He just happened to cross the river the next morning on his way to see his girl, and he don't know even yet that he was suspected or that there was a reward out for him. But that wasn't none of my business. You advertised for him without any string on it as to his guilt, and so I went and got him for you. Now you'll understand why I wanted that little reward in advance, for I shore did earn the money." He set his hat a trifle closer and took up a few inches of reins.

"And now I'll tell you the rest of the story, for I want to do the square thing

by all parties. I borrowed sixty dollars from that old skinflint Muñoz, and the night of the dance I called him out to pay it. He demanded a hundred, and I slapped his face for being the hog that he was. He reached for his gun and I plugged him good and plenty—and I'm mighty glad of it." The Kid's revolver flashed in the sun, and his face became a mask of death. The glare of the Apache filled his eyes, and his mouth framed a long, narrow crocodile grin.

"And now I wonder what you *hombres* are going to do about it," he said.

Slowly, with fingers outstretched, their hands arose. Surveying them malevo-

lently for a moment, he backed his horse into the chaparral until he was half screened by the trees. Cold and deadly his voice came to them.

"And now, *adiós!* I hope you won't be fools enough to come after me." Wheeling as if he had been upon a pivot, he darted down the winding peccary-path like a rabbit, and a minute later there came faintly to their ears his call and challenge, the long, singing cry of the coyote with its short terminal yaps.

Silently, slowly, avoiding each other's eyes, the late escort of the departed one went slowly on to the lowly hut of the ancient Mexican.

THE SONS OF CALVIN FAIRFIELD

(Continued from page 49)

but somehow, I want my boys to work out their own salvation. I've given them each half. The strongest will run the business anyway, and that's the way it should be."

"But Mr. Fairfield—"

"Eddie is smart—and sort of sharp," Calvin Fairfield went on. "He sort of takes after his mother. She was a good woman, and she helped me over tight places, and perhaps that was what made her kind of hard and scheming. She had to scheme pretty hard when Eddie came along."

"Hugh's mother was different. And she had things easier. Hugh doesn't shine like Eddie, but he gives a good steady light. . . . Perhaps I'm prejudiced, like Jacob was toward Joseph, but—"

"Hugh!"

The voice, shrill and unlike anything she had ever heard come from mortal lips, frightened Pen. She sprang to her feet, knocking over her chair. An instant later the door was swung open, and Hugh came in, closely followed by Edward.

THE evening papers that night carried the news. Calvin Fairfield had met his Bosworth.

"Mr. Fairfield was in his office, talking to one of his employees," was the way the papers expressed it.

"I'm surprised you weren't the employee, Pen," said Mrs. Hallowell severely. For once, Pen said nothing.

Edward reappeared at Fairfield's the day after the funeral. Pen instantly sensed the change in him. It was in his eyes, his manner, his voice. He vibrated power and the consciousness of it.

The memory of Calvin Fairfield's death was still vividly before Pen, as was a certain preposterous statement he had made. She made up her mind to dismiss this from her thoughts, and this she strove to do—with the usual degree of success.

Edward settled the matter for her by summoning her to his office.

"Would you like to enter the advertising department?" he asked abruptly.

"Why—I'd love to!"

Edward nodded gravely. "For the present I am simply going to assign you to the advertising department," he explained. "I feel quite confident that before long you will be head of it. That, of course, is between ourselves."

"Thank you."

"Not at all. Personally, I believe women really turn out the best advertising copy. Some owners do not believe in giving them the title of advertising manager, but I certainly do."

He turned to take an advertisement from his desk.

"Fairfield's has clung to the old-fashioned form of advertising with pretty deadly persistency," he continued. "Look at this."

Pen read the items indicated:

SPECIAL VALUES IN SUITS	
Beautiful warm suits.....	\$24.50
Lovely broadcloth suits.....	29.50
Very handsome suits.....	32.50

"It's exactly the sort of thing I'm sick to death of," said Edward. "Compare it with Merton's snappy copy and illustration. That's what I have in mind—a thoroughly modernized appeal, something with *pep* and *class* all through it."

"I'll do my very best," promised Pen.

"I know you will," he said, and rose with the half-apologetic manner in which he always ended one of their talks.

HUGH did not appear at Fairfield's for a fortnight. By that time Edward was firmly ensconced in his father's office. Hugh had been, so Pen learned, to Maine, whither he had taken his father's body.

Pen thought Hugh looked older and soberer. But as Edward's activities increased, Hugh's slackened. Often he brought a bag of golf-clubs or a tennis-racket with him in the morning and then disappeared during the afternoon. Pen felt that he ought to be ashamed of himself. She herself was busy with her adventures in advertising. She had a faculty for arrangement and expression, and it was fascinating to put it into play.

Edward proclaimed her efforts "bully"—as they were.

"I meant to give you some of Marshall Field's ads and a few of Selfridge's which I'd saved," he said, "but it wasn't necessary. You've worked out something as good and yet entirely different. Tell Jackson I said to run that as it stands."

Edward always said "I." Nothing in his words ever indicated that Hugh existed. The impression had become general that Calvin Fairfield had nominated his older son as his successor and given him a preponderance of power. Pen knew differently, of course, but the fact

remained that Fairfield's was being run on a policy designated by Edward, with or without Hugh's acquiescence.

Pen assumed it was with Hugh's acquiescence until in February she went to Edward's office with some advertising copy. She knocked, and he called "Come in."

To her surprise she found Hugh with him. Edward's face was thunderous. She hesitated on the threshold and would have retreated had not Edward come to his feet and told her to stay. Hugh's eyebrows lifted at that. Pen noticed this and resented it.

Pen already prided herself on her business experience and knowledge. Actually she was still naïve. She did not realize that she was being wooed as, Edward had decided months before, a thoroughly modern young person, such as she assuredly was, must be wooed.

"I've just gotten a tip that Merton's has come a cropper," said Edward. "The papers will carry news of their failure in a few days—perhaps sooner."

"Merton's—failure?" echoed Pen incomprehendingly.

Edward nodded.

"Merton was just about to shoot himself in his office when his secretary came in," he said. "They've got him in a sanitarium now."

"But—I don't understand."

"Overextension and increased overhead got them," explained Edward. "My brother and I have been debating the advisability of bidding in their stock and the lease to their building."

He stopped and glanced at Hugh, but Hugh did not speak.

"It's the chance of a lifetime," Edward enlarged. "We can step right into their shoes and capture their clientele. It means for Fairfield's what Fairfield's most needs—a modern plant. We can pick up all Merton's service-features without loss of momentum."

Edward came to a full stop and gazed squarely at Hugh. His eyes challenged the latter as unmistakably as if he had thrown down some visible gage of battle.

"Undoubtedly," commented Hugh dryly. "But considering where that momentum carried Merton's, why not stop, look and listen?"

Edward made a gesture that was as explosive as an oath.

"Merton's came a cropper," he said.

Facts You Should Know About Teeth

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It constantly accumulates. And, unless combated, it clings and stays—particularly in crevices.

That film is what discolors—not your teeth. It hardens into tartar. It holds food particles which ferment and form acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth—the cause of decay.

It forms an ideal breeding place for germs. Millions of germs of many sorts are ever-present in it. They may enter the tissues. They, with tartar, are the chief cause of pyorrhea. And through the stomach they may cause many other troubles.

So now the main object in cleaning teeth is to combat that film. All else is nearly useless if we fail in that.

Old methods of tooth brushing have failed. Statistics show that tooth troubles have constantly increased. All because that dangerous film was largely left intact.

Today there is a dentifrice which combats that film effectively. We call it Pepsodent. It contains a factor which no other tooth paste has. Now that it has been accepted by many authorities, we are urging you to try it. And we supply for the purpose a test tube free.

Pepsodent PAT OFF
REG. U.S.

The New-Day Dentifrice

Sold by Druggists in Large Tubes

THE PEPSODENT CO.

Dept. 95, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago

There's Now a Way To End It

One week of Pepsodent, we believe, will change all your ideas of teeth cleaning.

It is based on pepsin, the digestant of albumin. The object is to dissolve the film—which is albuminous.

Pepsin alone would be inert. It must be activated. And the usual activating agent is an acid harmful to the teeth. So a pepsin tooth paste has heretofore seemed impossible.

But science has supplied a harmless activating method. Five governments have already granted patents on it. And three years of clinical tests have proved it an efficient film preventive and destroyer.

That is the tooth paste which we ask you to test. It is as pleasant as any old-time tooth paste, and it does what others can't do.

Send the coupon for a One-Week tube. Use it like any tooth paste. Then watch the results.

Note how clean your teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of that slimy film. Note how the teeth whiten as the fixed film disappears.

You will know in a week that Pepsodent is doing what was not done before. You will know that the film—the great tooth wrecker—has met an efficient foe. And we believe that you will always use it, twice a day, to prevent the film accumulation. Your dentist will prescribe it.

This is important. **Let you forget it, cut out the coupon now.**

One-Week Tube Free

THE PEPSODENT CO.

Dept. 95, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

Mail One-Week Tube of Pepsodent to

Name

Address

"WHO CARES?" is the title of the brilliant new novel

By Cosmo Hamilton



Cosmo Hamilton in the uniform in which he served during the first year of the war as an officer in the Anti-Aircraft Corps of the British Naval Air Service.

THERE never has been a more brilliant commentator on American society than Cosmo Hamilton. His keen insight into life and motives, his sparkling style, his daring unconventionality—all combine to make him the ideal man to write of the favored of fortune in our country.

The title "Who Cares?" is taken from the lips of the girl around whom his new novel centers, a girl demanding everything of men—and of one man in particular—and expecting to give nothing in return. The story pictures New York society of to-day as it is.

The story, of course, appears first as a serial in

THE GREEN BOOK MAGAZINE

in which his novel of 1917, "Scandal," appeared.
It begins in the April issue, now on sale.

impatiently, "but the fact that we take over their plant and their stock at a sacrifice does not mean we are going to."

"No, it doesn't," admitted Hugh. "What I object to is your policy—and that is to out-Merton Merton's."

"What do you mean?" snapped Edward.

Hugh took his time about answering. "It goes back to what Dad said about the way he made his money," said Hugh.

He turned to Pen and added explanatorily: "Dad always said he made his money by letting people think he was fooling them, whereas—"

"Miss Hallowell, having talked with Father on several occasions, probably heard that at least once," interrupted Edward. "You might save time by explaining just what the present application is."

Hugh's jaws tautened. "It means," he said, and in his voice Pen caught a decisive note that surprised her, "that what Merton's tried to do and what every other department-store seems to be trying to do is to fool the people by letting them think they are getting more and more for nothing—and still making them pay for it."

"Well?"

"That looks, to an innocent bystander like me, like a race with a goal like Merton's."

EDWARD would have spoken, but Hugh refused to yield to him.

"The real danger in this business, Miss Hallowell, is that the department-store is so run that even a slight cut into its profits will bankrupt it. Supposing that not one sale in four is canceled by a subsequent refund, but one sale in three and a half. Well, you can guess what that means."

Edward sprang to his feet and walked impatiently to the window. He stood there for an instant, looking out. Then he turned to Pen.

"I am sorry now that I asked you to stay," he said with a fine effect of candor. "I did not realize that this would develop into a conflict of opinion. But as long as you are here, you may as well stay."

"I want to make Fairfield's a modern, progressive store—the leader in this city. I have tried to do this ever since my father's death,—as I am trying to now,—with every ounce of energy I possess. The question of a building has bothered me. Now that the way is miraculously cleared—"

"I told you it was not the building I objected to," said Hugh. "It's the methods."

"Well, what would you do?"

Hugh crossed his legs and stuck his hands in his pockets.

"I'd make a bid for Merton's," he said, "but I'd put the brakes on. I'd retain the reading-room and the tape-machine and the concerts and the pretty little hospital-room; the cost of these is negligible."

"You certainly have courage," remarked Edward with what came perilously close to being a sneer.

"No, I haven't. Because if I had real courage I'd start a clean deal. I'd make people pay for every privilege. If they wanted goods sent—charge them for that. If they wanted goods charged—charge them for that too. I'd have three prices

for every article in the store, in other words."

"How about exchanges?"

"I'd tell them not to buy unless they felt certain they would keep the article. If they wanted to change it, they'd have to pay a nominal sum to cover that."

"You'd fail."

"Possibly. But so has Merton's."

"Merton's was an exception."

"Only because they went the limit in what is known as a liberal policy."

"Anyway," said Edward, "that scheme of yours is hardly original. Father mulled it over for years, and—"

"Father was right," said Hugh with a return to the whimsicality which always seemed to madden Edward.

Pen rose hastily.

"I must go," she protested. "The copy for the morning papers is still waiting."

Hugh was nearer the door. He held it open. As she thanked him, his eyes held hers for the time it takes a stopwatch to tick. In that veriest fraction of a second Pen had a feeling that Father was right—if not in his ideas about the future department-store, at least in another thing.

PEN soon learned the outcome of the clash between the brothers. A day or two later she received a call to Edward's office. She found him smiling.

"We're all clear for action now," he said. "Hugh has sold me the control."

Pen smiled her answer. Yet incongruously she felt a passing pity for Hugh. Edward may have guessed this. Anyway, he added:

"Hugh has driven a mighty close bargain. He had papers drawn up which"—Edward's eyes darkened with annoyance—"are as full of frills and furbelows as only a high-priced corporation lawyer could devise."

"What will he do?"

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"But won't he go into business himself?"

"Do you think that likely?"

Pen did not.

"Besides," said Edward, "he still retains a slice of stock in Fairfield's."

An instant of silence was broken by Edward: "But what I really want to say is this: I am going to give you charge of the advertising department."

Pen flushed with pleasure as she thanked him. But a moment later she asked: "How about Mr. Jackson?"

"That rests with you. Perhaps you can use him in some capacity; otherwise we will have to drop him. He should have a lot saved, anyway."

Pen was silent. Jackson had been advertising manager of Fairfield's for more than a quarter of a century. His advertising methods dated back that far—but Calvin Fairfield had always called him John and asked about Mrs. Jackson's health. Pen hoped he had saved—But Edward was waiting.

"I'll do all I can," she promised.

"I know you will," he said quietly. "Together we'll show them."

In his tone there was that which disturbed Pen. She hoped he wouldn't "spoil it all."

Edward did not. Whatever might have been his plans for the future, his present

was mortgaged. Never had he appeared to better advantage than during the next month. The mighty task of closing one store Saturday night and opening another Monday morning was engineered with a smoothness that amazed those who, unlike Pen, were not behind the scenes the breathless Sunday that intervened. The change was made the easier by the retaining of many of Merton's employees for the great sale that celebrated the event.

One of Edward's first acts, after settling himself in the sumptuous private office in which Samuel Merton had so nearly enacted a tragedy, was to issue a statement to his employees explaining in detail how liberal Fairfield's aimed to be in the matter of adjustments and exchanges. To this was added Edward's own dictum: "Whatever the customer says is right, is right."

Also he began to build up what he called a sales-force with pep. As a result many of the Fairfield employees gave way to the Merton employees. This, Edward explained to Pen, was because Merton's sales-force had been trained along the lines he had in mind. She saw the clear reasoning of this until she noticed, one morning, that old Saunders was gone from the neckwear-counter. Saunders had been on the neckwear-counter ever since Calvin Fairfield started business. He must have been seventy-five.

Pen hoped he had saved a lot too. And with an effort at clear reasoning, she told herself that certainly the red-haired girl, who was a heritage from Merton's neckwear-counter, had more pep.

Fairfield's had grown—grown enormously in a few weeks. The impetus gained by the introductory sale had never slackened. The squadrons of delivery-trucks and teams had doubled. Pen, passing from department to department, noted with satisfied eyes the crowds of shoppers gathered about such counters as displayed the advertised "special values." She knew that her advertisements were something more than pretty. They had what she spoke of confidently, to the utter bewilderment of her mother, as pulling-power.

Hugh she saw just once. He appeared at her office, explaining that he had come to say good-by.

"I've bought an old tramp steamer and fixed it up as a sort of private yacht," he said. "I've always had a hankering to own a boat—not a steam yacht but a regular boat."

Pen was taken by surprise. It seemed so—so utterly puerile. He guessed this.

"I suppose you think it sounds like something an overgrown boy would do."

Pen's answer was indirect: "Aren't you ever going back to business?"

"That depends. I'm waiting to see how Edward comes out."

JUNE came and passed. Pen promised her mother she might go to Singing Beach for a week or two in July; then she postponed it to August. In the meantime Europe went mad. After that, Pen postponed her vacation indefinitely. She would have felt like a traitor to have taken time off just then. The conflagration across the water was reflected, in Fairfield's, in a thousand different ways. Buyers had been caught in Paris and

London; they telegraphed hectically for assistance. A shortage of imported goods was imminent. Money was tight. Edward Fairfield's manner was short, even to Pen, these days.

In September, Hugh returned. Pen read all about his homecoming in the morning papers. He had been cruising in European waters when the war broke. He brought back a number of refugees, including several of Fairfield's distraught buyers—and what the marine reporters referred to, with characteristic insouciance, as a million-dollar cargo of dyes.

Later she saw Hugh himself. He ran squarely into her as she emerged from the elevator on the seventh floor. He was tanned to a copper hue, and he wore an atrocious necktie.

Pen spoke of the newspaper accounts.

"I had a hunch something would happen pretty soon over there—perhaps this summer," he explained. "After the assassination at Sarajevo I was sure it would come; so I hung around, waiting for trouble to break."

"You really thought there would be a war?" demanded Pen.

"It's been coming a long time," he said, and then referred to Fairfield's.

"Fairfield's has grown a lot," said Pen.

"It certainly has. I hardly recognized the place—or anybody in it. And I'm quite sure that few recognized me. Most of the old faces are gone."

Pen nodded gravely. "We've been building a new sales-force," she said. "The old one lacked pep."

Hugh smiled.

"The new one certainly doesn't. What do you think of this necktie?"

"I've seen—more quiet ones," she confessed. "It doesn't exactly suit your complexion."

"That's what I thought. But there was no telling the saleslady so. I stopped at the neckwear counter to get something quiet, but she never even listened. She told me this was the brass-band season, and well, she certainly had pep."

Pen smiled.

"She didn't put it on you, did she?"

"No—I tried it on to illustrate a point to Edward, and forgot to take it off."

"If you hadn't put it on, you could have exchanged it."

"She'd sell me another just like it."

"You could have gotten your money back. Fairfield's is always willing to exchange anything or refund the purchase-price."

"I know it; I saw the signs all over the store. I suppose women have a lot of fun doing just that, but being merely a man, I'll give the tie to the bo'sun—he likes them audible—and buy my next tie at a man's shop. They're not so highly seasoned with pep yet."

HUGH made three trips across, before winter set in. In between he appeared from time to time, exclaiming to Pen that as a minority stockholder he wanted to be sure things were going as they should. He had an air of smiling bonhomie that made it impossible to dislike him, but always, after he left, Pen contrasted this—unfavorably and with unnecessary vehemence—with Edward's growing moodiness and taciturnity.

It seemed to her that Edward had to

work the harder, that Hugh might play. Of course, he was doing some good; he had brought back a whole shipload of stranded teachers and ministers and tourists of a like type. But the captain could have run his boat. It would have been fairer if he had taken hold and helped Edward.

"Aren't you ever going to take up a part of the management of Fairfield's again?" she asked him one day. "Your brother is having a hard time carrying it all alone."

Hugh's face was serious for a moment, but he returned to his lighter manner to say: "Oh, I help him. I just dropped in now to tell him an awfully nice thing I heard a customer say."

"That was good of you."

Hugh hesitated. "Edward didn't seem to think so."

"What was it?"

"Well, there were really two customers. One said: 'Fairfield's is just splendid to deal with.' The other said: 'Yes; you know that smock you said made me look dowdy. Well, I took it back, and they didn't say a word about its having been worn—just gave me my money. And I went right across to Maxwell's and bought that darling pattern you told me about.'"

Hugh's mimicry was inimitable, but Pen's lips tightened.

"Excuse me," said Hugh meekly—they had gotten far enough for that.

Pen bent over some proofs sent to her desk for an O. K.

"Well?" said Hugh finally.

"I'm very busy."

"You are always busy, aren't you?"

Pen lifted her eyes to his.

"Always," she said evenly. She felt that he deserved it; it wasn't the least bit nice of him to bother Edward that way.

The days passed. Hugh did not appear at Fairfield's. This period was, to Pen, the hardest of her business career. Of course, Hugh's absence had nothing to do with that. It was simply that she had been working very hard, without any let-up, and was tired. And the death of old Saunders depressed her. He had been found in a South End lodging-house, with the gas turned on. It was unmistakably a case of suicide.

The same day she read this in the papers, she encountered Myrtle Fish. The latter had been one of the first of the old Fairfield force to go. Myrtle did not seem to have suffered for food or raiment as a result; indeed she was plumper and far better dressed than Pen had remembered her. She did not see Pen, who went out of her way to speak to her.

"You seem to have prospered amazingly," commented Pen, noting Myrtle's expensive furs.

"I haven't starved," said Myrtle,—and for the first time Pen noted the metallic hardness of her eyes,—"even if Fairfield's did throw me out."

There was a challenge in her tone that Pen ignored.

"Where are you working now?" she asked hastily.

"I'm not working anywhere," Myrtle replied evenly.

Pen had heard, of course, of certain things that sometimes befell girls of Myrtle's class. This was her first personal

contact with such things, however, and she recoiled from it. Myrtle's eyes noted her change of expression.

"I've worked in several places since," she said, "but I got sick of it. It's bad enough working day in and day out and trying to be decent on seven dollars a week without having to show pep and salesmanship. Somehow I never seemed to feel a lot of pep after breakfasting on two doughnuts and a banana."

Pen wished she had not been so impetuous in accosting Myrtle. She could think of nothing adequate to say.

"All I got to sell is myself," said Myrtle recklessly. "It's bad enough when they say all you're worth is seven dollars. When the war came and they marked me down to six, I quit; that's all."

Pen breathed easier as she made her escape. But somehow she did not react to Fairfield's that morning. She could not get either old Saunders or Myrtle out of her mind.

LATER in that same week Pen learned that Hugh Fairfield was going to Belgium. He had sold his boat to the British Government and was himself going to volunteer for service in the great task of feeding Belgium—a task that had not yet been press-agented. He would sail Saturday afternoon.

Saturday morning Pen awoke with a feeling of impending loss. It enraged her, and she set herself to shaking it off. Once at work in her office, she managed to put it aside, at least for the time being.

At ten-forty she gathered up a mass of data and went to Edward Fairfield's office. His secretary smiled and said:

"There's no one there—go in."

Edward Fairfield was sitting at his desk, his hands motionless before him, his head bent forward.

Pen greeted him and rapidly outlined the advertisements for the Monday papers. She felt that his attention constantly escaped her, and when she finished he made no comment. She glanced up inquiringly. He passed a hand over his forehead, as if to brush away something.

"It's warm here," he said; rising abruptly, he strode to the window and threw up the sash.

The brisk, chill breeze rustled the papers on his desk. Pen reached forth to restrain these from flight. As she did so, her fingers encountered something cold and metallic. She started to draw this forth and use it as an improvised paper-weight; and then, as her startled eyes comprehended what it was, she let it stay where it was.

Edward Fairfield turned quickly. She forced herself to look at him. He had been working very hard; he certainly appeared overwrought. Still, it was preposterous to think that he would do such a thing. But there was the revolver, lying concealed under his papers. And Samuel Merton had tried to shoot himself at that very desk. . . . Perhaps it was the strain.

"You are not well?" ventured Pen, breathlessly.

"A headache," he murmured irritably. "It will pass."

"There is something the matter—" she began.

"The matter?" He took up her words

with a violence that seemed to fling them back at her. "I suppose," he added abruptly, "that if I told you Fairfield's was on the verge of a receivership, you'd be surprised."

"Receivership?" echoed Pen, utterly aghast.

Edward Fairfield eyed her curiously.

"I once thought you were an extraordinarily clever woman," he commented cuttingly.

This was in a key Pen's ears had never attuned themselves to. But though she might resign her position later, she could not resign her responsibility now.

"I don't understand," she said aloud, and she added to herself: "Why, oh, why doesn't some one come?"

"That is quite evident," he commented.

Pen strove vainly for a suitable reply. She could hardly say, "It's too bad," or "I am sorry."

"You may go now," he said. It was the first time he had ever absolutely dismissed her. Pen, so far from feeling offense, wished she might indeed go.

"The copy for the newspapers—" "It is all right."

Pen tried to decide, in her desperation, which would be better—calmly to take possession of the revolver and defy him, or to leave him and—and what?

Edward Fairfield's face darkened.

"I am busy—" he began, and was interrupted by a knock.

"Good heavens," he exploded, "what now!"

The door opened, and his secretary appeared.

"Your brother is here," she announced.

"Tell him I'm busy."

"No, no—tell him to come in," directed Pen. Then as the girl gaped, Pen herself called out: "Mr. Fairfield!"

HUGH entered. He stood for a moment just across the threshold. It seemed to Pen that never before had she realized how tall he was, how wide of shoulder, how steady of eye. Curiously, his father's estimate of him came to her mind:

"Hugh doesn't shine like Eddie, but he gives a good steady light."

"Miss Hollowell forgets herself," observed Edward. His voice was absolutely malignant. "I presume you have come to say good-by. If so, let us say it at once." He turned to Pen. "You may go now," he said.

Pen glanced from him to Hugh. But before she could speak, Hugh said quietly:

"I think there is some reason why Miss Hollowell feels she should stay."

Edward's face vibrated with anger.

"Get out—both of you," he shouted.

Hugh turned to Pen.

"What is it, Miss Hollowell?"

"He's—he's got a revolver," she said breathlessly. "And he's desperate because business is bad, and—oh, look out!"

Edward, after a glance of incredulity, had picked up the revolver. But he merely held it in the palm of his hand.

"So you thought I was going to shoot myself?" he demanded. His voice was barbed. He turned and picked up a piece of calico from his desk. "I suppose," he added, "that you thought I was going to have a dress made out of this?"

Pen struggled against physical revulsion

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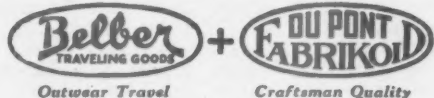
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that left her sick, and the disquieting knowledge that she had made a fool of herself. She was accustomed to seeing all manner of articles on his desk; she might have known the revolver was but one of these. Buyers were continually bringing such things to him for inspection.

"I thought!" she began.

"Thought!" repeated Edward with infinite scorn.

Pen strove to find her voice. But before she could speak, Hugh intervened.

"Perhaps you had better go," he said, and opened the door for her.

As he swung the door to behind her, he turned toward Edward.

"Sit down!" he said.

The words weren't spoken very loud, and the door was only open a crack, but Pen heard them. And somehow she never questioned that Edward sat down.

In her own office, Pen sat at her desk with the copy for the Monday papers lying unheeded before her. Once an assistant sought the answer to a question.

"Please don't bother me; I'm busy," said Pen. Then feeling that needed amplification, she added: "I'm thinking."

PEN was still thinking when she heard Hugh's voice in the outer office. She rose, and conquering an impulse toward flight, opened the door.

"Come in," she said. He did so and stood smiling down at her. She wished he wouldn't; it made her feel—flurried.

"Edward has been under a great strain," he said abruptly. "I suppose we will have to forgive him much."

"I don't quite understand just yet, what happened. We seemed to be doing a tremendous business—"

"You were—more than ever before. But Edward made it too easy for customers to change their minds—and their purchases. The number of exchanges and refunds increased to the point where the margin of profit went floozy."

"Can't something be done?"

"I think likely. Anyway, before I sold my stock, Edward signed an agreement that if Fairfield's ever reached the point where the overhead ate up the profits, I should be offered my stock back again, at par value, with full control. I've bought Edward out."

"You are going to run Fairfield's—alone?"

Hugh smiled wryly.

"I'm afraid I'll have to. Edward is going to get out. I don't blame you for thinking it strange I should attempt it."

Pen colored. "It isn't that," she amended. "It's just that you've been out of touch—"

"Hardly that. I've visited a lot of foreign markets since I left here, and the knowledge I picked up ought to help Fairfield's in times to come. Goods are going to be harder and harder to get. And between times I've talked to some of the big department-store men—veterans, most of them."

He regarded her thoughtfully.

"You'd be surprised to know how many of them feel as Dad did, that the department-store of the future will be a vastly different proposition."

"Not so many privileges?"

"The privileges will be there, but the customer will be told frankly that it isn't

something for nothing but something they must pay for."

"Like your three-price store."

"Exactly. But that's for the future. About all I'm going to do at the start is to change the signs around the store. I'm going to tell the customers, frankly, that we'd rather have them say no to a salesperson than to buy something and return it later."

Pen gasped. "Why—that will cost you a great many sales," she protested. "And it will slow the sales-force up."

"I'd rather sell two articles, and have them stay sold, than to sell three and have one returned. If I could achieve just that one thing, it would mean a bigger profit and better wages. As for the sales-force, it's got too much pep, anyhow. My motto will be 'Less pep, please.'"

"But there must be some salesmanship—"

"Of course. But I'm an ordinary human being, and I hate to be herded or hurried into a sale. When I buy, I want to decide for myself and not have my wits scattered by a human talking-machine that's full of canned pep. I judge others by myself."

Hugh rose.

"I felt I should tell you that Edward was a little bit premature with his talk about a receivership," he said. "He assumed that I wouldn't be able to get hold of enough ready money to tide us over. But I've made some lucky investments—"

He broke off, to answer the question in her eyes.

"I sold the boat for about three times what I put into it. And then that cargo of dyes is about worth its weight in gold now. I was pretty lucky."

Pen glanced up at him.

"Was it really all luck?" she asked.

"You told me once that you had a hunch there would be a war. Did you know about the boat being worth more—if it came?"

"Why—I suppose I had a hunch about that too," he said. "But I was lucky to get so much for it. And of course the dyes were an opportunity no one could help seeing."

"Quite a few people did," observed Pen.

He colored like a boy and changed the subject.

"In a way, I'm sorry I can't go back. No one here realizes the conditions in Belgium. There is so much to be done."

Pen saw that he really meant it.

"There is much to be done here too," she urged. As she spoke, she was thinking of Fairfield's as a business institution. But the moment the words left her lips, her vision grew clearer and larger. The new business policy under Edward, old Saunders' death and the fall of Myrtle Fish—these had been hopelessly jumbled in her thoughts. Now they separated sharply, as cause and effect.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, and her eyes shone and her face became eager, "I am sure that if you can do all you plan, you will help here—help as much as you could in Belgium."

"You can see that?"

"I can—now."

There was nothing in that to start a landslide. But as her eyes met his, she remembered what Hugh's father had said, and what Hugh's eyes had said—and

so forth. And in spite of herself, she felt very—very unusual. Very hot or very cold, she did not know which—flutter. Little by little her eyes fell, and a traitorous, lovely color flamed in her face.

HUGH rested his finger-tips on her desk and bent toward her.

"Pen," he said, his voice not quite steady, "I may be headed into an awful cropper. But win or lose, there is only one thing that counts, anyway."

"P-p-please," begged Pen. Of course he had said nothing, but she knew.

"That is all I'm going to say now. I do need your help here, and I don't want to make it impossible for you to stay. But I wanted you to know—that much."

Pen kept her eyes resolutely on the copy for the Monday papers. All she saw was a vague cloudy square of white; all she was conscious of was the fact that he was near—and that her heart was beating like mad.

"I know you love your career, and I promise you I'll say no more until—"

There was a knock at the door, and Pen's stenographer appeared.

"The buyer from the kitchenware department is waiting," she said.

"All right; I'm going," began Hugh.

That organ which (to take a physiological view of it for a change) busied itself with healthily and prosaically distributing Pen's life-fluid suddenly rebelled. And as this rebellion spread, quick as the sour of a flame, Pen's lips joined it.

"Tell him I'm busy," she said. "I'll see him by and by. And—and please don't let anybody interrupt me for—for ten minutes."

The door closed. Pen could not meet Hugh's eyes. For once in her extremely self-assured young life she felt utterly overwhelmed by what she had done.

"I—I love my career," she exclaimed hetically. "And I—I adore the kitchenware department. The kettles and pans are—darling, but they can—can wait."

In her face was a shame and a glory that—let psychologists analyze it as they will—passeth understanding. Hugh saw it and felt the impulse to humble himself before it, and instead did—the traditional and wholly desirable thing. And such conversation as occurred during the next few minutes was carried on in the face of great difficulties.

Love had enfolded them as in a shell; the music of the universe sang in their ears.

IT was, however, a great blow to Pen's mother.

"They just went away and were married without a word to anybody," she explained to an intimate-of-intimates. "Just as if Pen were a shopgirl! And they kept it secret as long—well, as long as they possibly could. Pen says she wanted to go on with her work and have a share in Hugh's success. I can't understand it at all."

Mrs. Hallowell sighed—sighed indignantly, if such a thing be possible.

"I suppose I should be used to such things," she said in a tone that made it plain she would be highly enraged if anybody should suggest such were actually the case. "It was just like Pen."



The Men are Away but the Home is Protected

They rushed to the colors—but not until each one had first fulfilled a *duty* to his family. Soon they'll be in the trenches with Pershing. They *know* home is safe because they left behind them a safe, silent, steel sentinel. They chose an Iver Johnson to defend the home for two reasons: "You can't forget to make it safe"; and "It is safe even in the unskilled hands of a woman."



There is nothing to fear from an Iver Johnson for the man or woman who owns it. When danger comes you can instantly jump to the Iver Johnson there in the bureau drawer. Can you in justice to those you love deny them another day of the *complete* protection an Iver Johnson gives?

It cannot be accidentally discharged—you can "Hammer the Hammer." There are no levers to adjust or forget. Its safety is automatic—part of the action.

Iver Johnson Hammer and Hammerless models with Regular, "Perfect" Rubber, or "Western" Walnut Grip, are sold at all hardware and sport goods stores.

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Indicate which books you want: A—"Firearms,"
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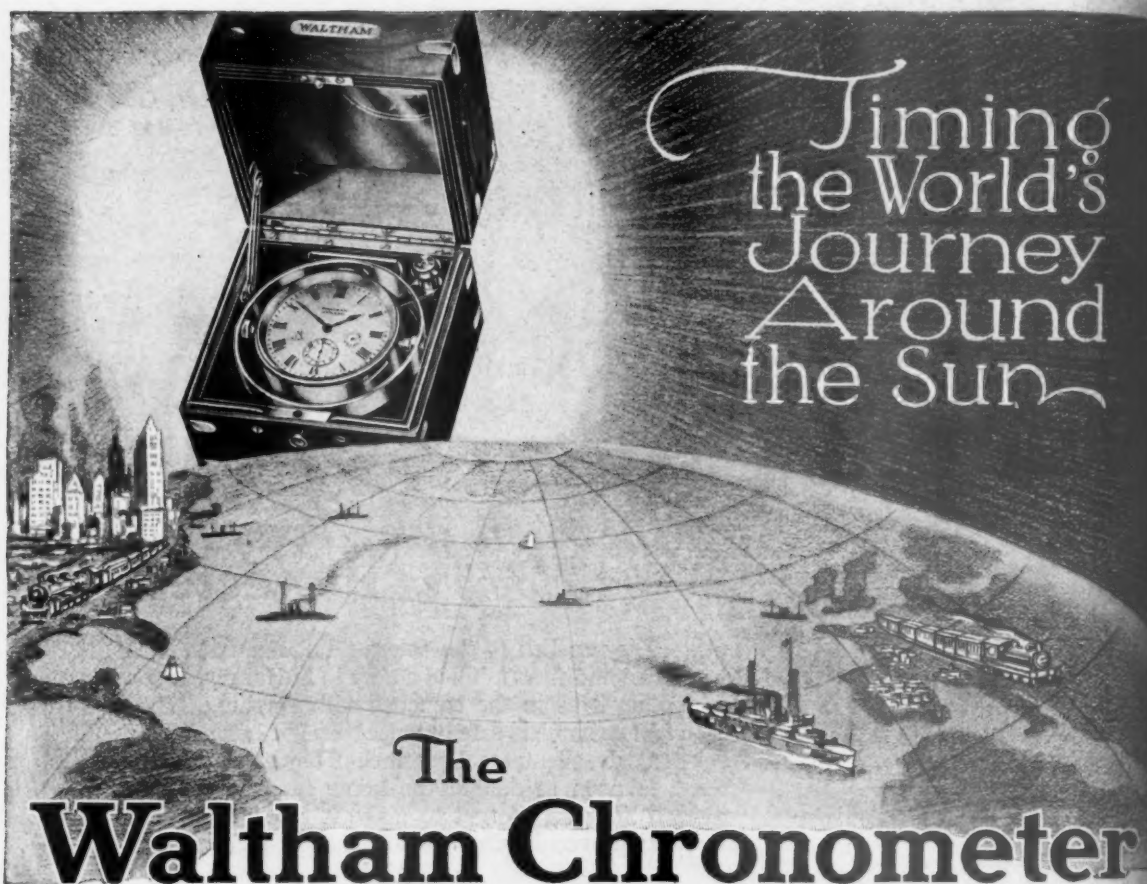
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This Iver Johnson Hammer Model with "Western" Walnut Grip has perfect balance and is a dead shot.



Timing
the World's
Journey
Around
the Sun

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Times the War Ships of Uncle Sam and Britain

Dreadnoughts of war guarding the gateways of nations; destroyers vigilantly roaming the seas in quest of their hidden prey; ocean leviathans that carry their passengers safely from shore to shore when peace reigns — these are guided in their activities by Waltham Chronometers.

No greater faith was ever shown in the precision of a timepiece than when the war governments of the United States, England and Canada placed their orders at Waltham. Faith based on tests which proved the reliability and precision of the Waltham Chronometer.

Waltham, the only watch factory in the world that is equipped to make Chronometers, is also supplying other timepieces for war work. Deck clocks, comparing watches, airplane clocks, wrist watches—all made at Waltham—are doing their bit in helping the Allies go "over the top" to victory.

Visit the jeweler whose reputation stands highest for quality. Ask him to show you some of the Waltham models—for example, the Riverside. Here is a watch you will be proud to give or to own. Moderate in price, and made in five sizes—three for men and two for women.

The Riverside symbolizes that lofty ideal of fine watchmaking which has led the horological experts of the greatest nations to choose Waltham in preference to any other watch made in America—in preference also to the finest timepieces of Switzerland, England or France.

WALTHAM

THE WORLD'S WATCH OVER TIME

Magazine

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Save

1-wheat

use more corn

2-meat

use more fish & beans

3-fats

use just enough

4-sugar

use syrups

and serve
the cause of freedom

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and drink largely
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Grape-Nuts
is a master food
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"There's a Reason"

Adapted from Rodin's
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